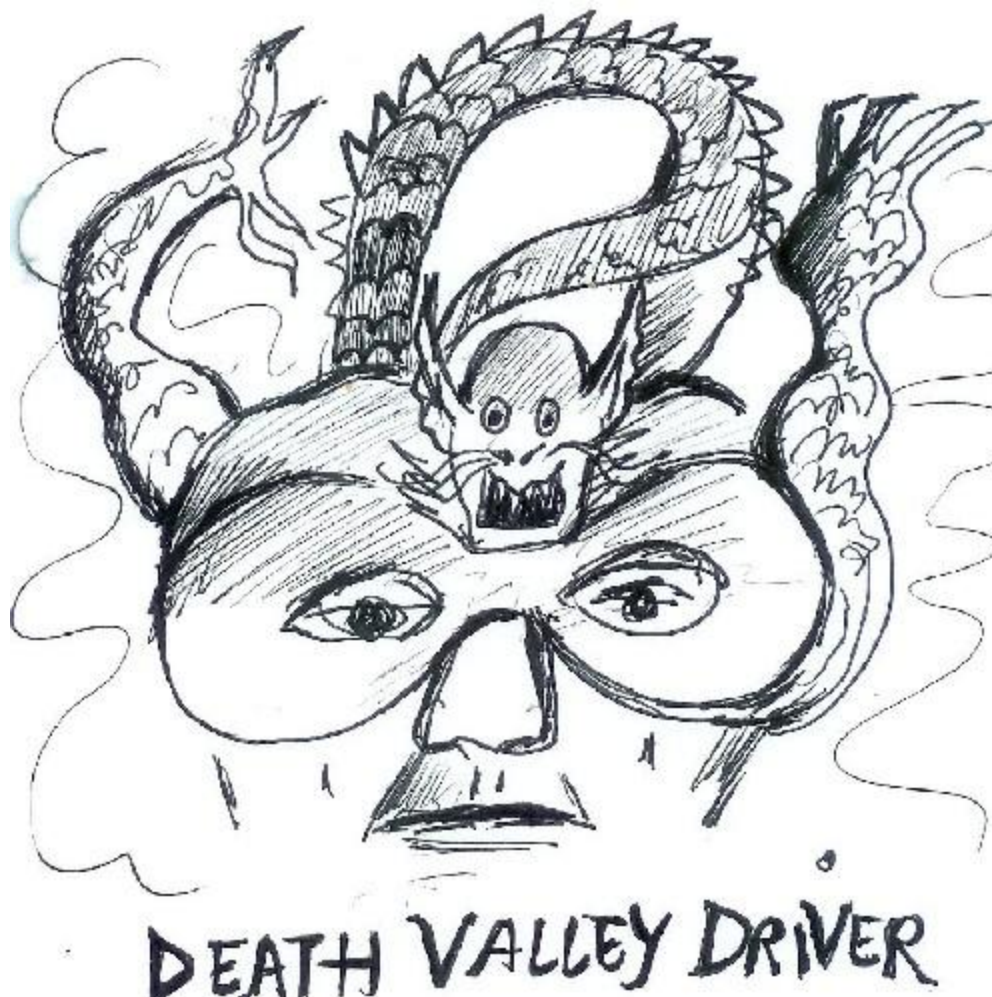




WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #145 ~!

Hi! Remember us? Times passes. Interest Change. And some things get sacrificed. This might be the end of our longest sabbatical ever. It might be just the beginning. Ah.... the mystery.

Remind me to murder Schneider the next time he says footnotes. Speaking of which, clicking on a footnote opens a new page because we wanna fuck with your pop-up blocker (well it will once the page is finished). The entire footnote page can be found [here](#).

~!~

Zero One Refusion 11/7/03

(by PHIL SCHNEIDER)

Zero One as a promotion is really hit and miss(1), but here is a case where almost everything worked on some level. Really fun top to bottom card.

Kohei Sato/Hiroataka Yokoi/Jun Kasai vs. Naohiro Hoshikawa/Yoshihito Sasaki/Kuroge Wagyuuta

This was a worked basic Smackdown tag style, with no real purpose, just alot of big moves.

Pretty fun stuff though, with everyone looking good. Wagyuuta has always been a pretty limited

guy, but he looked great here, as did Sato and Yokoi although workrate Rowdy isn't really the Rowdy I like.(2) Not a match you will remember 10 minutes after watching it, but perfectly fine way to start a show.

Kintaro Kanemura/Tetsuhiro Kuroda vs. Wataru Sakata/Osamu Rouko

There is clearly a nice sized difference between the way New Japan and Zero One bring up their rookies. In New Japan you will wrestle about a dozen matches throwing some dropkicks and either win or lose by Boston Crab. (3) Here in Z1, Osamu Rouko debuts by getting his head sliced open by ex-FMW scumbags. This match was all about the rookie showing his toughness by taking a beating, and it was done well. They kept the utterly useless Kuroda out of the ring for most of this and focused on Kanemura slicing up Rouko. I dug the spunky little guy fighting back and Sakata was fun as a shooter working a garbage match, this match was really satisfying wrestling.

Steve Corino vs. Sean McCully

Corino has been in three of the greatest live matches I have ever seen (4), but is generally pretty awful in Zero One. McCully is this tiny kickboxer who for some reason is always put over big in Z1. So I was expecting this to really stink. This show for some reason can spin gold out of shit as this was actually really enjoyable. They had the U.S. heel ref, who usually ruins matches, but was actually used well here. Corino would cheat to get the advantage, and then take a nice sized beating from the little midget. The finish was cool too, as McCully put on a cross armbreaker, and while Corino was tapping the ref counted McCully's shoulders down. Fun way to use a heel ref and a spot Tirantes should steal if they ever start a Super Porky headed worked shoot promotion in Nacapulcan.(5)

Akio Kobayashi vs. Kazuhiko Ogasawara

This is one of my favorite feuds in wrestling. Basic story seems to be the Mr Miyagi vs. Ponytailed guy fight from the end of Karate Kid III. With Ogasawara in the Miyagi role. This match is more of a spotfest Karate feud then their rematch (6). Really stiff work, and bunches of cool awkward looking Karate spots, my favorite was Ogasawara attempting a high kick on the outside and just smacking his ankle on the ringpost. This is like Buzz Sawyer vs. Tommy Rich - a feud you could watch forever.

Shinjiro Otani vs. Tatsuhiro Takaiwa

I could see alot of people liking this match more then anything else on the card. This was really late 90's NJ Juniors style, tons of big moves and not much selling. That kind of match really doesn't do it for me anymore, as I really need a match with some kind of purpose to it. Execution was good, spots were cool, but nothing was going on here. Takiawa does some pretty questionable selling at points too, including going right back on offense after taking a pair of really nasty looking Dragon suplexes. (7) Maybe if the match ended sooner, I would have liked it more, but it really engaged me less then anything else on this card.

Naoya Ogawa/Katsuhisa Fuji vs. L.A. The Giant/Takao Omori

Ogawa is turning into one of my favorite wrestlers and Fuji is also a lot of fun, but even Superman can't rub a turd into a diamond. Omori stinks, and he is teamed with L.A. The Giant who is the tubby skinny armed 6'7 skinhead (8). This guy had the shaved head with sideburns, Iron Cross tattoo, Screwdriver tattoo and Lightning bolt SS tattoos. He also looked totally untrained. I could see bringing in this guy if you were going to run him against Goldberg, but he is pretty useless against Japanese guys, I mean Germany and Japan were allies. I do think a Pride fight against Bob Sapp is money though. Someone put that together for Hustle 4.

Shinya Hashimoto vs. Masato Tanaka

This was one of the most fun matches of 2003. Just great stuff, and a reminder that when he isn't wrestling useless So-Cal Roid boys, Shinya Hashimoto is the best wrestler around. The first Hashimoto vs. Tanaka singles match (9) was a barrel of fun, but was basically an extended Fit Finlay Worldwide squash (10), with Hashimoto finding new and interesting ways to maim someone, and Tanaka getting a couple of hope spots. In this match Hashimoto is still the unquestionable master at kicking your ass, but his injured shoulder allows you to actually buy that Tanaka could win the match. This really told a great story (11) as there was big drama, could Hashimoto crush Tanaka, or will his body fail him. Everytime Hashimoto layed in one of those overhand chops, you had the damage it was doing to Tanaka, and the wear and tear on Hashimoto. You wouldn't think being crippled would make someone a better wrestler, but it really does add a dimension to Hashimoto's matches that make them even greater.

~!~

12-Pack of a Comp. Full of Old School Some Old Fool Sent Me - Part ONE

(by RAVEN MACK)

(BEER ONE) I'm full of dirt. I've got a dirty house, a dirty car, and a dirty face. I've got terrible dirty thoughts in my mind, especially around women even remotely attractive, and I take a shower every night, but there's always a splotch of oil paint on my left elbow or some chicken grease under my right thumbnail. I don't mind not cutting the grass, or even leaving broke shit laying in the yard by the shed, and I definitely don't give half a fuck to keep everything clean and prim and proper and spray chemicals to kill the weeds that want to grow there so easily. When I go in the clean, bright malls, with the clean, smiley faces all around, decked out in their perfumed and cologned Old Navy and Ecko and other well-labelled crap, I get white-knuckled and usually have to leave without even finding whatever it was I was supposed to be looking for. I drive as many back roads as I can, preferably ones without lines, and I have no qualms about setting a 12-pack behind the passenger seat, opening it up, taking one out, drinking, and covering up the 12-pack with yesterday's newspaper still sitting in the back seat of my car, which has a new dent by the gashole because my trunk release gets stuck sometimes and I had myself convinced that I could pound it like the Fonz to make it catch to spring loose without getting my damn keys out the ignition, but the other day it didn't work, I didn't "heeey" it up just right or something, and my keys were somewhere in the house, so I kicked my car and made the dent. It was a real clean car when I got it - only 96,000 miles and spotless. I've wrecked it twice, and the windshield has a chip in it that's barely passable come inspection time. It cost me

about nine long distance phone bills worth of money to fix the stupid thing last week, and when I got it back, my airbag light was on again, which sucks, because I spent almost \$150 on it last fall to get it corrected, and the dealer never fixed it - just stole my money, and I ended up having to put some speaker wire into the diagnostics box and tapping the positive terminal on my battery at an alternating and accelerating rate to reset the airbag light. I don't feel like doing that again. If I had that nine long distance phone bills worth of money back, I could've gotten some nice speakers to replace the ones I found at the dump that I'm using now; and I could've paid my long distance phone bill so I wouldn't have to dig a five dollar phone card out of my raggedy wallet just to call my mom to say "What's up." The speakers I found at the dump are actually pretty good, but they weigh about a hundred pounds each - very state-of-the-art Let's Make A Deal type stuff. And if I got some nice speakers, I'd probably just spill spaghetti sauce on them or accidentally poke a hole in the woofer with a flying screwdriver; then I'd be forced to patch the woofer with duct tape like every other damned speaker I've ever had in my life. Dirty. Call me a Dirty White Boy, call it the Dirty South, call it whatever the fuck you want to. If I knew you, I probably wouldn't feel comfortable around you, but I'd be real polite because that's how I was raised, and I'd try to be funny to make up for my feelings of financial insecurity. But then when we got to drinking, I'd get all loud and start driving at a high-rate of recklessness, all because of some stupid reasoning like, "I never listen to Lemmy sing 'Eat the Rich' without trying to do bootlegger's turns (1) on logging trails." I'm pretty smart, but probably don't display it the way you'd want me to. I'm also pretty stupid, mostly from learning how to second-guess every goddamned thing I think, due in part to taking too many world religion classes in college and in part to loving on women.

All this relates to wrestling because I, much like N.W.A. in seemingly ancient days of "Fuck Tha Police" (2), take pride in my dirty-assed life. It's to the point, I cherish the dirt and feel it makes me better than others. I like my sex sweaty and with loud music, and I like my cars going around in circles to be at a dirt track with a six-pack cooler between my legs, not on a 48" plasma screen.

And I motherfuckin' love my wrestling to be dirty. I love the look of fourteen-year-old girls barely having discovered their own sexuality wanting to hug the beautiful babyface as he comes to the ring, them girls sporting feminine colored tank tops holding their fresh sproutings of breasts. I love the old, drunk, white man, usually with some sort of mesh baseball hat floating on top of his head, getting mad and wanting to fight the little, shit-talking manager ringside. I love the real threat of violence in the ring - not the clean, imaginings of great simulated athleticism. I love chicken wire cage matches, and detest lighting rigs and smoke machines.

I know I'm a piece of shit. Somewhere along the way, I got old. I'm only thirty-one, but when I wasn't looking Big Daddy Kane got replaced by Jay-Z, Kreator by Slipknot, hot rods with backseats big enough for two replaced by Honda Civics with eight hundred dollar rims. I'm a dinosaur, a dirty piece of shit dinosaur with his head buried in the ideally remembered horseshoe pits of my past.

Fuck it. I know this dude Dreamkiller (not his real name, just his stupid computer pseudonym) who was in Iraq, and the angle is he was liberating the oppressed, but the real backstage story is he basically was hanging over there for a minute, and his wife had their kid while he was gone, and me and him met somehow in this mess of internet-entanglement, but I sent him some shit, and he sent me some dinars, which I gave to my mom to make her more worried about just how dirty I turned out to be, and he finally came home, to meet his daughter and be free himself for a few hours a day, and he found it in his heart to send me some tapes. Also, I owe him the copy of the PWI 500 I bought, but remember, I'm a piece of shit, so I haven't even mailed it to him yet. I do know it's in the bathroom underneath a pile of Box y Lucha mags, on top of the peach crate turned sideways that we use to hold the extra rolls of toilet paper.

Anyways, one of the tapes this cat sent me is just a compilation of old school shit. It might be a pre-made comp he bought off someone, or he might've made it especially for me, or it could be a McAdams or Lynch special or whoever sells that type of stuff. I'm sure the video quality is going to be grainy, which is perfectly imperfect for me, and I'm sure I'll love something in there. So I'm going to let the wrestling show me how to find something to love again in my dirty little cynical heart, which hopefully I can carry out into the World with me for the next few days before I start going to the pool hall about ten miles over with a chip on my shoulder like I did the other night, hoping for a fight. Thirty-one or twenty-one or fifty-one years old, you can't roll into backwoods places like that looking for trouble too often without finding more than you wanted eventually. But then again, sometimes when life feels like it's kicked your ass, it makes you feel better to get an actual ass-kicking, to match your psychological state with your physical one. Yeah...the wrestling.

Playboy Buddy Rose/Pretty Boy Doug Somers (with Sherri Martel) vs. Curt Hennig/Scott Hall Hennig and Hall are your AWA tag team champions, and Buddy Rose is your unheralded hero of actual life. A good friend of mine grew up in Portland, and he said when he and a buddy were kids, they saw Buddy Rose downtown one time, and the other kid went up and said, "You're Buddy Rose, aren't you?" all incredulously and excited. Buddy Rose responded, "Fuck off, kid." LIVE THE MOTHERFUCKIN' GIMMICK! I get a lot of joy out of thinking about Scott Hall now, after making millions and being the bees' knees (3), now mired in obscurity. I imagine he's out there somewhere, probably in the type of bar where they have fire painted on the walls, with some Great White groupie serving up drinks, and Hall sits there making small talk with her, but not much, thinking about her tired thirty-something tits, and he looks over at the braided ponytail sheetrockers playing pool, and he studies the tattoo on the ass of the chubby girl playing Pit Boss, her tattoo below the line of her red thong but above her low-cut jeans, and she's wearing a visor that says "SASSY".

(BEER TWO) And I imagine Scott Hall's life is even more Bukowski-esque than I could even paint it right now. But at this point in his career, he was wearing cowboy-themed boots, and his partner Curt Hennig was not dead. Hennig is the technical masterpiece of the hybrid face team, so common at the time, while Hall plays the powerhouse good ole boy. And Buddy Rose, despite his horrific body and gaudy throwback bleachjob hairdo, is the King of taking the abuse as the heel leader, and heelishly stalling whenever necessary. I hope Doug Somers buys Buddy

Rose a steak every now and then, because none of us would have ever known who Somers was without him sidekicking it along Rose there in the AWA's waning days. Colonel DeBeers comes ringside, perhaps the greatest South African wrestler ever other than maybe Steve Simpson, and he's talking commentary trash on Scott Hall, who already has a bump on his head from a backstage face-first piledriver. Scott Hall has Rose in a chokehold, and Sherri Martel distracts the ref as DeBeers slams Hall into the ringpost. Hall lays down and gets counted out as he blades a nice wound, well complemented by his staggering routine around the ring for five minutes. Titles change hands by countout, and Scott Hall is proof positive of the wonders a Magnum P.I. mustache can do to make you look completely different. Hall was great at being the pissed off good guy, and it amazes me somebody had the perverse creativity to look at that and make him into a second-rate Scarface's best friend rip-off. And it amazes me even more that it worked.

Killer Tim Brooks vs. Brian Adias

When the fuck was there a female valet named Raven? Her hair is mad feathered, and she's mad pissed at Sunshine, who was the girl that Steve Austin stole from Chris Adams I think. Then you've got a Gary Hart promo, and Gary Hart is without a doubt the most conniving, methodical, demented manager in all the history of wrestling. He's intelligent yet devious, and I imagine somewhere now he's a small college professor who secretly funnels cash into Al-Qaeda's coffers. Gary Hart hates Fritz Von Erich.

This all precedes Killer Brooks in the ring, who's just turned quasi-face I'm guessing from Gary Hart's nefarious rantings, and Brooks sports a flaming skull mesh baseball hat. No, wait, he's heel – I know for two reasons. One, he's wrestling Brian Adias for the Texas heavyweight title, and two, he's got black wrist tape on. Brooks was always the wrestler who most looked like somebody who'd bring their chainsaw by my house for my dad to fix when I was a kid. His boots also are monogrammed "KB" instead of "TB", and if my wife ever runs me off, it'd be great to go hit up all those hippie jam festivals they run all over the place in the summertime and wear me some "KB" wrestling boots, which would suggest one thing, but then I'd just rob little fratboy Widespread Panic fans of their drugs and cash, until I eventually went to jail for robbing the wrong little bitch, but even that would lead to glorious cassette player engine tattoos of cartoon-looking birds leaning against a fence on my forearm and fun time-consuming things like that. Brian Adias was always vanilla boring, and even Brooks' crowd-taunting beatdowns can't drag me into this. I'm paying better attention to the scores scrolling across the bottom of the screen. Tim Richmond won the Firecracker 400; only the good die young, boy (4). The crowd is actually cheering, "Go, Killer, go!" and the commentator is hep enough to mention it and talk about how odd it is. Adias wins the Texas title with a backslide after a dropkick, and man oh man has wrestling changed.

Kevin Von Erich vs. Chris Adams clippings

We've got some old woman and Gary Hart altercating, and Kevin Von Erich tries to break it up, but then he hits Hart and catches a Chris Adams superkick, punctuated by a beatdown by I think Gino Hernandez and Jake Roberts. Then a clip of Parade of Champions grudge match

start-up by the two. But then Chris Adams helps save Kevin from One Man Gang's fist wrapped in chain. And Adams and Von Erich shake hands.

Rick Rude/Blackjack Mulligan/The Great Kabuki (with Percy Pringle) vs. Kevin & Lance Von Erich/Chris Adams

Okay, finally an actual match after all those clips, and it's your main event on World Class Championship Wrestling this week. Personally, I don't think there was a finer tag team in the history of wrestling rings than Blackjack Mulligan and Rick Rude; and Kabuki is just extra salt in the eyes of this fine menagerie of evil. Hey, we've got a slow-motion replay of a Kevin Von Erich dropkick, his bare feet tagging Rude across the chest. Awesome, I never noticed that Lance wrestled barefoot as well, and the commentator called him "superbly handsome;" ahh...the days when women still watched wrestling. You've got the Von Erich Iron Claw on one side, and Blackjack's black-gloved claw, along with Kabuki's Asian nerveholds, and the muscled forefingers of four men in this match COULD END SOMEONE'S LIFE! Blackjack locks up in a test of strength with Adams, and then suckers him with a beautiful jawjacking punch. Rude tags in and follows with some sweet forearms. Kevin Von Erich into the ropes and Mulligan tries for the claw and we get the Dracula wedge wrist-clutching battle that invariably precedes any use of the clawhold in wrestling, complete with Mulligan bugging his eyes out in mad delight at maybe, just maybe, murdering one of Fritz's loved young 'uns. Another sign of the old ways, as Lance comes off the ropes, attempting to duck a Rude clothesline, but it catches his finely coiffed hair, so Lance sort of stumbles into the ropes, selling the blow that barely touched.

(BEER THREE) It's broken down into a free-for-all, and Mulligan avoids the Dracula claw from Kevin, then they poke Chris Adams in his bum eye a few times, and we get a cheap DQ victory for the good guys. Again, I have to admire the insane creativity of whoever saw Percival Pringle and envisioned Paul Bearer from that. Vince McMahon must be tormented by terrible terrible nightmares. Or more likely, he wakes up from these terrible nightmares with a hard dick, and he looks for someone to put those nightmares inside of.

Ronnie Garvin vs. Leo Burke (with J.J. Dillon)

The main point of this match was to set up Tully Blanchard vs. Garvin, and this was during the Hands of Stone period. Leo Burke was specifically selected because he's a former Canadian Golden Gloves champion (5), according to Blanchard, who's doing a voice-over on this clipped match. Dillon enters the ring with his shoe, but of course, Garvin ducks and Burke takes it to the kisser. Blanchard is on the apron with his arm in a cast and a sling, and Garvin punches Dillon who knocks Blanchard off the apron onto his arm. The crowd squeals with delight at the good Reverend Blanchard's further pain, but like any good wrestling angle, they're delight is quickly pissed on like Chuck Berry's blonde girlfriends. As Garvin does his bounce dance, waiting for Burke to stagger up and get knocked out, Blanchard sneak attacks, off goes the sling, and instead of a taped fist knockout punch, Rugged Ronnie Garvin gets a casted fist knockout punch. Tully Blanchard was always the greatest heel ever, and you think about the wildest most believable assholes like himself, like Jake "The Snake" Roberts, like Buddy Landel, and they all flirted with Jesus after their wrestling star had diminished, and it's only right once the devil reneges on his promises of eternal pussy and a never-ending rail of coke, that one would turn to

his enemy – Jesus. Unfortunately, Jesus has a lamer entourage, so most of the time, the bad gone good eventually meander back to bad. But not ol’ Tully. He’s still converting North Carolina prisoners into sheep to this day, slingshot suplexing Lucifer out of the minds of the Tarheel State’s incarcerated.

The Road Warriors vs. Joel Deaton/some other dude

It’s a squash, but Jim Cornette is on the color commentary, doubting the imperviousness of the Road Warriors.

Then Cornette is wearing a fedora, and accompanied by Big Bubba Rogers, and he’s interviewing Paul Jones - in his Hitler get-up, Baron Von Raschke, The Barbarian, and Shaska Whatley - who’s proudly waving a long Boogie braid at the camera. There’s a tennis racket and one of those swank Huey Newton chairs in this scene as well. And Whatley is so motherfuckin’ great with the promo, cockily taking his hat off to wave his head around, even though he’s got what, a half inch of curly wisps and not the long golden mane his movements suggest. Paul Jones, after a flash of a picture that shows what a bald Paul Jones would look like, is just as great as the completely upset manager. These types of feuds played great in the sticks, dirty little towns where I grew up, where we knew we weren’t good enough (or rich enough) to get Barry Windham, much less Ric Flair, so we thrived on the Valiant vs. Jones feud that’s probably still being carried on somewhere in Appalachia.

Tony Rocco vs. The Great Goliath

I have no idea what all this is about, but Rocco puts Goliath on the mat with a few varieties of armbar crispiness. Goliath gets a wristlock for a second, but Rocco busts out more technical mastery to get a hold of that arm one more time. The commentators says it’s 1986 and in California, but the style of match suggests late ‘70s to me – slow and deliberate as fuck, and with very little flash at all. A couple minutes in and The Great Goliath has the armbar control now, by pulling the hair. They actually built up to pulling the hair. Wrestling’s a lot like porn in that it used to be a lot of foreplay involved, and you got to see someone’s clothes come off, building to the simulated action. Now, wrestlers throw fireballs at fake commissioners and piledrive paralyzed children during their ring entrance, and you go into the adult room at a video store and there’s so many weird, vile things staring at you - weird sub-cultures of nasty, naked fetishes, that you start to feel sick in the head for even trying to find the barefoot inter-racial chubby amateur flicks you were looking for in the first place. Goliath has Rocco down on his stomach, with a knee into his kidneys, and such simple creativity makes me happy. There’s some barely English-literate color guy on this, and he goes, “You know how I’d get out of this? (about a chinlock) I’d bite his eye.” Don’t let the Democrats fool you into believing otherwise – foreigners love biting Americans. Plus throwing fire at us. And salt. If wrestling’s taught me anything, it’s that you can’t trust a foreigner, unless he’s a non-aristocratic British person. Goliath takes a slingshot into the top turnbuckle, gashes himself, and Rocco pulls him up while biting him on the forehead, giving a great visual. Both guys get to biting and fighting, and knock the ref down, and Rocco looks like Dennis Hopper’s older brother. The ref, after getting knocked down about seven times, finally calls for the bell and we’ve got a double disqualification, WHICH

BEGS FOR THE NO DQ REMATCH! That stip would guarantee the type of gore that would send a California crowd home happy unlike any bullshit TV taping ever could.

AWESOME! Rocco gets on his knees with his hands behind his back center ring, and Goliath does the same thing, and they headbutt the fuck out of each other for a few minutes before Goliath finally heads to the back. That was easily the greatest match I've ever seen between two people I'd never heard of before.

Brett Wayne Sawyer vs. The One Man Gang (with Skandor Akbar)

Again, I don't understand the perverted mind that could look at The One Man Gang and think up Akeem the African Dream. OMG had "MOON" going down the sides of his trunks, and I can't be entirely sure that OMG is not the uncle of both Mean Mitch Page and Rollin' Hard. Wrestling is so pussy nowadays. Why the fuck is there no terrorist manager like Skandor Akbar riling up the crowds into testing the strength of the security force? The only thing I got was Emilio Charles, Bestia Salvaje, and Scorpio Jr. wearing head dresses with their regular ring attire for a few months.

(BEER FOUR) I can only assume it's because we are so fucked as a society that if you had Sabu and Sonjay Dutt form an Al-Qaeda-friendly tag team managed by Skandor Akbar, twisted fucks raised on a steady diet of internet porn and Grand Theft Auto would proudly wear the accompanying Sabu/Dutt t-shirts to be anti-cool, which is cleverly patriotic in their overly ironic minds. OMG got disqualified, by the way, and of course, he crushed Sawyer with his girth afterwards.

"Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer vs. Terry Taylor

This is for Taylor's UWF Television title, and Buzz Sawyer is sporting the most serious furry boots ever known to wrestling, which is fitting since Sawyer is the greatest speed freak ever in wrestling, except maybe Chris Candido, and holy fuck, as Sawyer suckers Taylor in with the handshake and starts to stomp on him, these truly are the greatest wrestling boots ever. There's three tiers of fur, each run at an angle that dips toward the back of the boot, with the low rung covering the entire foot of the shoe. You don't find nearly that attention to detail now; the most you can hope for is some tassles. And Buzz Sawyer is balding, with furry boots. Man, he fills me with a wild love for life. And to think he ripped off The Undertaker on training him to be a wrestler back in the day (6). I imagine the drunken depths of depravity sunk down to in hotel rooms and backroom bars during the heyday of the Tommy Rich/Buzz Sawyer feud will never be seen again in the professional wrestling, not with our pussy society that condemns drinking and driving because some bitchy moms got nothing better to do than complain about them not teaching their kids to not do stupid things like ride in cars with drunks. And not with wrestlers always being under the watchdog eye of internet smarkish rubes, waiting to post about every encounter with a wrestler they've ever had, and awaiting email responses from last month's indy wrestler extraordinaire to do an email interview for their "news" site. Nope, two grown men trying not so much to challenge death as to push the set boundaries of life can no longer completely cash fat paychecks and blow it on crank, drank, and the stankhole. Now, we just get guys scarifying each other for minimal payoffs that barely cover the internet hydrocodone addiction,

and the blowjobs from 16-year-olds just barely cut the pain. Hell, Tommy Rich is still alive out there somewhere, and I'd rather read his life story, as he tells it to someone who can put it into complete sentences, rather than the monthly parade of "tell-all" bullshit autobiographies wrestling throws out with mad hype as to how insider it all is. I could give a fuck less about insider stories; I want to know what Tommy Rich is thinking when he's throwing quarters at the slot of a drink machine for four hours outside a hotel lobby. It seems the only place you can get some real wrestling like that anymore is Mexico, and even then it's tinged with homosexual promoters and furry midgets, though I bet Wildfire's seen his fair share of all that as well.

(BEER FIVE) And shit, furthermore, the whole complete awesomeness of rooting against some conniving asshole in furry boots like Buzz Sawyer is that, hey, I'm a workingman, work all day for my meager pay, come home to a house full of unhappy wife and crying kid and baby screaming murder because she's cutting teeth in this world for the first time, and all I want is to still believe that through my hard work, just straight persevering through all the bullshit of an everyday workingman life, that I'll come up and hold mad amounts of money in my dirty hands one day. That's all I want. That's very old school, and that's why old school wrestling has that structure. Today, a cheating cokehead in furry boots would get cheered by people he spit on in the front row; they'd be even more into him, looking at their friends, "Dude, did you see him spit on me? He's fuckin' awesome!"

Today, in my shitty workingman life, we set up some scaffolding, only two bucks high, so that we wouldn't fall off this old farmhouse's roof we're painting, even though it'd probably be smarter to have all that ladder hook bullshit, but this old farmhouse's owner doesn't have ladder hooks and all that in his barn, but he does have some scaffolding. Anyways, me and the guy I work with are setting up the scaffolding, and I'm explaining my basic distrust of working on scaffolding because it confuses my sensibilities to realize how half-assed I can be and how I'm suddenly standing twenty feet in the air on top of some metal pieces that I just slapped together in about half an hour like oversized Tinker Toys. Then I went on to tell the guy about the scaffold matches of wrestling's past, and we both stood there two bucks high, thinking how those crazy motherfuckers were three maybe four high, and had to get knocked off to lose the match, and even if they did hang from underneath to fall, that's still an insane thing to do with your body, all for a bunch of cheering slobs, looking for a release from their shitty lives. The World's done changed. Old school wrestling doesn't work and a scaffold match wouldn't work, because wrestlers and wrestling fans don't know shit about it anymore. I guess if you'd have a website commentary match, where the wrestlers ran off to ringside laptops when they knocked their opponent unconscious momentarily, and they worked on a witty insider's account of their current match, and once one guy's updated official website got a certain amount of hits for his newly updated commentary, he'd be the winner. That'd be way over, and guys would be in the crowd updating people on the internet about the match while it happened, too. Man, that'd be great. I bet Bruiser Brody and Dick Murdoch are stoked to be dead. And Jerry Lawler ought to be dead, going from a fist-dropping good ole boy to a squirrely-voiced pervert squawking seventh grader-level sexual innuendos.

Did I mention these particular Buzz Sawyer boots are the greatest furry boots ever? It looks to be some sort of Egyptian llama fur, surely bought with twenty dollar bills coated with coke

residue. Wait, we have a commercial break, and when we come back, Terry Taylor is talking about how the deck was stacked against him in this match because he didn't have the normal amount of time to prepare for Buzz Sawyer, but he's got the title belt still, so the end of this match is ruined for me. They should've had a warning saying "WARNING: The following Terry Taylor promo contains spoilers," so that the UWF message board wasn't flooded with angry emails...oh wait, that's today's bitch-ass bullshit. Not only does Buzz Sawyer concentrate his attack on Taylor's back, but your commentator is nice enough to explain it all out to you, laying out the maneuvers Sawyer did, and how it "doesn't really affect his breathing or lung capacity, but it certainly has an effect throughout the course of a match." God bless the old school. A bloodied Sawyer nails a powerslam to quell a Taylor uprising of momentum, and Taylor kicks out, leading to a quick sunset flip reversal of something by Taylor for the three that looked like two, but who cares? The good guy won - fuck my boss, fuck taxes, God Bless America. Buzz Sawyer hates America, even from the grave, because he's stomping on my Television champion in furry boots that look pretty goddamned foreign to me. Ahh...Taylor hits a Thesz press for a second three-count, but one without doubt this time. Awesome swerve of a questionable face victory leading to the complete satisfaction of an undisputable pinfall.

Jack Victory (with Lady Maxine) vs. Koko Ware

Ware doesn't have a parrot on his shoulder, and Victory's not in a hockey jersey looking like a guy struggling on his way through the fourth step of the 12-Step AA program. Koko Ware is ridiculously small; and I can only hope that at some point when both of them had long blonde hair, Jack Victory and Brian Lee worked somewhere as a tag team and got to ride the roads together all summer long, sharing the women and the wine. Victory is basically slobberknocking Koko Ware, and the crowd's attention perks up because out comes Dark Journey to confront Lady Maxine, which distracts Victory since all this conundrum is going on along the ring aprons, and of course, tiny Koko Ware gets the schoolboy roll-up for the victory on Victory, who's pissed, but gets tossed out by Ware, leaving Lady Maxine and Dark Journey to roll around punching each other pitifully in the ring, and goddamn, I'm watching every other week of ECW TV ever, but years before it. Dark Journey, though a fan favorite, throws powder in Maxine's eyes and kicks her in the cooch, and the UWF was where the lines started to blur and the bad was good and the good acted bad and I imagine ECW TV would've been so much better if they had a low-key guy like pre-muscle disease Jim Ross talking instead of Joey Styles screaming.

(BEER SIX) Hacksaw Duggan is kicking a little promo about how he's double tough, a double regular dude, and gonna double fuck up the One Man Gang. Tough good ole boy with beard and ponytail versus biker from the dark side - man, wrestling was so much more like people that hung out with my folks back then, crazy cranked up drunks with good hearts. Maybe I like this old school crap because it reminds me of what is gone - you can't party like that anymore. We have cookouts here at the compound, and you can drink and all in the yard or at the horseshoe pits, but if you're going to burn a bowl, you've got to go into the woods, because the women won't let you do it in front of the kids. How the fuck are they going to learn it's okay to burn a bowl, but not okay to be laying out lines? They don't see you smoking weed, they just know you're going out to do it secretly. That's how my folks did crank, on the down-low, but I knew what they were doing, and I knew it was hidden because it was bad. Do I want my kids to grow

up thinking that same line of shit about smoking a bowl? Maybe I like the old school because it's dirty and dark, like the IGA store in town back then in my memories, and there might be a busted jar of mayonnaise that sits on the floor for an hour before one of the kids working at the store gets around to cleaning it up, but there was also a dude who cut your pork chops for you on the spot, and he'd cut them fat if you wanted, or thin. Shit, you could get bologna sliced thick, and it'd get wrapped in that white butcher's paper, and on Sunday morning, after a long Saturday's night of not hiding the bowls he was smoking by the horseshoe pits, Dad would make some fried bologna and fried egg sandwiches, on hamburger buns. He'd be blasting Red Headed Stranger or Saddle Tramp, and he'd be happy to be alive. What's with all this cleaned up, glossy wrestling and cleaned-up glossy Food Lions and Wal-Mart Supercenters, food all cut up and pre-shrinkwrapped, polished into a halogenic sheen, easy to consume, but hard to feed the soul?

I've got the instrumental to "Can It Be All So Simple" by the Wu pounding in my subconscious right now, like I always do when I reminisce about how the World's done left me behind, and I'm not entirely sure whether I was blessed or cursed to grow up the way I did in a place that was probably about ten years behind the rest of the World at that time anyways. Shit, with this computer box you're staring at, no one's left behind that far now, and that's not necessarily a good thing at all. I suggest you go outside and start a fire, and stand around it and just chill the fuck out and slow the fuck down for five minutes. If you live in the suburbs or city, no worries, just flip over an SUV and light it up or burn a homeless drunk or something. Fire cleanses the soul, just like water recharges it, and earth feeds it, and air...shit, we breath it to stay alive – I don't know what hippy dippy way to describe that in relation to your soul. (7)

Steve Williams/Ted DiBiase vs. The Blade Runners (with Eddie Gilbert)

Wow, you've got two guys who are now devout Christians in Sting and DiBiase, one guy who's now a half-insane Republican motivational speaker in Rock aka The Ultimate Warrior, and then Steve Williams who really hasn't changed at all except for getting older. Here's the angles of this match – one: all four of these men are going to be in the UWF title tournament later this week, so don't want to get injured; but two: the Blade Runners have never lost on TV, and Williams & DiBiase want to re-establish themselves as the motherfuckin' shiznit. Ted DiBiase is so fluent in the ring, and the perfect example of how less is more. When he had the Million Dollar Man gimmick, it actually took away from how perfectly motherfuckin' kick ass he was, because people thought about him stuffing hundred dollar bills in someone's mouths or making some fat woman show her belly tattoo instead of him just hip-tossing and fist-throwing his way into your heart. I mean, if we really had to hate on him, why couldn't they just put a black glove on his punching hand, so we knew he was evil? Sting, at this point, is far better than the Warrior, and does the majority of the match, only tagging in Rock to beat on a fallen opponent since Rock bumps like a piece of shit about four months removed from getting ripped off for ten grand by Buzz Sawyer. Actually, this match is testament to both Vince McMahon's egomaniacal stupidity as well as his immense business acumen, as you've got DiBiase, who was ruined by a gimmick, as well as the Ultimate Warrior, who was a steroid stiff at best, but somehow McMahon made him into a superstar. Four-way brawl breaks loose, and Gilbert dropkicks at DiBiase holding

Sting, but DiBiase rolls through and gets the tactical three-count. God bless television main events. (BEER SEVEN)

~!~

12/11/1999 Cobra Challenge

(by MIKE NAIMARK)

“Greetings! I’m Mark Hall!”

Ah Mark ‘The Cobra’ Hall, one of the innumerable colorful characters from the early pre-PPV blacklist UFC. In case Mark has gotten lost in your mental shuffle amidst the Harold Howards and Scott Ferrozzos, you might recall a spindly stripling in ninja pants (1) who bravely stepped in to the Octagon at UFC9 against the 370lb former Yokozuna sumo Koji Kitao and promptly split Kitao’s porcine face wide open with a single well-placed flail to the mush. Indeed, Mark Hall’s underdog effort was the high point of that fateful UFC show; less than an hour later, Dan Severn and Ken Shamrock would engage in the worst fight in MMA history (2) and Mark Hall’s accomplishment would be buried under a barrage of profanity, snoring, and demands for a refund. To add to his status as a true character of the Octagon, Hall stuttered, was partially deaf, and waited until after absorbed a hellacious beating from Don Frye to propose to his girlfriend in the middle of the Octagon, wheezing and stuttering while trying to look cheerful through swollen eyelids. (3)

Hall’s career soon faded after a series of poor outings, but true to the tenacious nature he’d displayed all his life, he soon returned to the sport as the promoter of a low-rent west coast-based promotion – The Cobra Challenge! “No rules, no excuses!” boasts Hall at the beginning of this event, the kind of old-school bombast that harkens back to the days of pressure-point striking and the legendary Dim-mak before these legendary techniques were banned for their unfair efficacy. (4) All action takes place in a ring in front of a small crowd of a size that recalls old WCW TV tapings, and various local ‘talent’ don the skimpy jiggle-togs to perform various semi-official tasks for the titillation of the audience. Who knew being Miss Budweiser California carried so many diverse duties?

1) Charlie Kohler (170lb, BJJ) vs. Mike Moreno (185lb, no style)

We open our night of action with a pair of men each making their professional debut. Kohler immediately shoots the double-leg but Moreno scrambles back to his feet and lands a couple of brutal noogies to Kohler’s unprotected noggin. Kohler endures and takes Moreno to the mat once again, this time maneuvering from side control into a mount in mere seconds. Moreno flops about desperately, looking like a frog swimming on its back before Kohler deftly whirls into an armbar which ends the fight in a mere 59 seconds.

Winner by submission, CHARLIE KOHLER!

2) Aaron Kepler (265lb, Tycho Brahe Jiu-Jitsu) vs. Scott Adams (220lb, submission)

Bring on the heavyweights! Kepler is making his professional debut here and has the misfortune to draw a match against an experienced veteran in Scott Adams. Adams is now best-known as

the lead submissions trainer for the SLO Kickboxing team, a stable which includes UFC contender Chuck Liddell, but he's also a solid fighter in his own right (5) and entered this event with a 4-fight winning streak. He immediately shoots the single-leg takedown and works through Kepler's sprawl until he finally gets half guard. Moving quickly, Adams passes into the full mount, and in mere seconds he has secured the Americana keylock (6) for the victory. Your winner in 1 minute, 4 seconds is SCOTT ADAMS!

3) David Roberts (180lb, BJJ) vs. Reggie Cardial (180lb)

Cardial opens with a stiff jab that lands hard on Robert's forehead and draws gasps from a crowd disappointed with two sissified submission wins thus far. The fighters grapple standing against the ropes with Roberts fending off some clumsy takedown attempts until they both become unbalanced and tumble to the mat. Roberts winds up in half-guard and quickly works his way up the scale to side control, finally winding up in the full mount. Unlike the girlish victors of the earlier matches, Roberts doesn't have any use for that fancy-dan submission work and starts to pound the heck out of Cardial to the great delight of the blood-starved crowd. The referee steps in and stops the match, with the cause of stoppage being officially announced as "Extreme Punching". This was the 90s, everything was "extreme" back then. Winner in 2:08, DAVID ROBERTS! (7)

4) Nicole 'Queen Cobra' Albrecht (162lb, no bra) vs. Peggy Brown (150lb, Daisy Dukes over bike shorts)

What would a low-rent California MMA show be without a couple of broads in skimpy tops engaging in what is billed as a "Catfight"? (8) The two hussies immediately start flailing away, falling into an awkward clinch complete with hair-pulling until 'Queen Cobra' uses the momentum and leverage gained by her mellonesque Winnebagos to topple Brown to her back.(9) Once in the mount, Albrecht throws wild, slapping punches, several of which could be in grave danger of breaking a nail and forcing a tapout. But just when you think the Queen is on the King's Road to victory, our feisty Daisy Duke-sporting Peggy Brown skillfully brings her legs back behind her ears (*cough*) and hooks Albrecht's flailing arms, sending our befuddled Queen rolling backwards and giving Brown the opportunity to land some blows of her own! With one arm still hooked with the legs, Brown rains hammer fists to Albrecht's ribs and the crowd goes apoplectic, perhaps sensing that their best chance to see "The Top of the Mountain" is at hand. Albrecht proves she's more than just another equine face blessed with enormous breasts and rolls out of captivity to resume her slap-heavy assault from a position which I suppose most closely resembles the side-mount until, in a moment that will go down in history, she grabs the neck of Peggy Brown's skimpy torn t-shirt and yanks furiously downward, exposing a black sports bra and the pathetic nature of the pickle-buffers in the crowd. After an awkward tumble, Brown emerges sitting on her rump with Albrecht in a headlock desperately slapping away at the back of her head. Some hair-pulling from the Queen breaks the hold and Brown rolls over to her back and lands a kick to the approximately two inch space between the bottom of Albrecht's sagging jugs and her groin. Albrecht fires back with repeated soccer kicks that force Brown under the bottom rope and to the arena floor, from where she never returns. The crowd moans in uniform glee as Albrecht is announced as the winner in 2:15, yet is clearly disappointed when she only teases removing her top.(10)

5) Aaron Torres (193lb Roughneck Jiu-Jitsu) vs. Michael McDonald (195lb sambo)

McDonald opens with a solid inside leg kick and the two men brawl wildly in the middle of the ring, throwing wild punches, lunging knees, and winging legs kicks, none of which do significant damage but look great. Torres counters a McDonald jab with a flinging overhand right that puts McDonald on his heels as the two men clinch and ease towards a corner. The action slows as McDonald hangs on to his double overhooks and Torres seems content to maintain position and throw the occasional knee to the legs. The referee finally separates the fighters for a restart but they immediately clinch and wind up in the each same position until Torres finally pushes off and lands a wide right hook and initiates another furious flailing exchange between the two with several powerful blows landing from each man. Torres eats a straight left and shoves McDonald to the ropes, grabbing a headlock in the process. McDonald counters in the exact same way we've seen the side headlock countered a thousand times – a magnificent back suplex that deposits Torres squarely on the back of his head. McDonald grabs side-mount after the impact and throws some ineffective strikes, allowing Torres to regain his bearings and roll to his side. As McDonald desperately attempts to maintain position, he's swept and loses his balance entirely. Torres quickly maneuvers to the rear mount and sinks in the rear naked choke in very short order. A drastic and quick turnaround to end the fight in an epic (by Cobra Challenge levels) 4:49, the winner by submission AARON TORRES!

The show now takes a break from the action to mollify those in the crowd who think mere fighting action is inadequate to satisfy their bloodlust. And so, in the spirit of the evening, a no-rules stickfighting match is announced. (11) No play-by-play here, but suffice it to say that this was one of the truly great no-rules stickfighting matches of all-time. Numerous thrashing blows to the head (covered in a fencing helmet), ribs, legs, arms, shoulders, etc, are exchanged along with kicks and punches, and at one point one of the competitors lands such a fierce blow to the crown of the head that his stick breaks in half. Like a sissy, he stands there and lets the referee replace it with a new stick, rather than jam the jagged end into his opponent's undefended groin. His opponent is lucky he wasn't facing a real no-mercy fighter like Frank Dux or a member of the Cobra Kai.(12) The fighters eventually tumble to the mat and flop around for a bit before the 3 minute time-limit expires.

6) Danny Henderson (147lb, submission) vs. Adam Castaneda (147lb, jiu-jitsu)

We now return to our regularly scheduled beatings. Castaneda passes out handfuls of peyote to the eager crowd. Well, ok, maybe he didn't. Both men immediately start trading wild punches in the center of the ring, like a cut-rate impression of Inoue vs. Vovchanchyn from PRIDE 10. Castaneda scores a knockdown and follows-up with a soccer kick which knocks Henderson senseless. A few punches later and the referee stops the fight like a big wuss. Winner in a blistering 59 seconds, ADAM "Don't Call Me Carlos" CASTANEDA!

7) Aaron Brink (218lb, BJJ) vs. Gan McGee (275lb, SLO Kickboxing)

Our big main event of the evening between two of the more notable heavyweight fighters in the world in 2004, although for vastly different reasons. Brink looks focused and sneers across the ring, while McGee is an imposing sight at 6'10. I notice that for the 'Superfight', the ring girls

have switched from tasteful Daisy Dukes and bathing suits to g-strings. Sorta gives the fight that extra bit of gravitas you need at the end of a card, I suppose. McGee towers over Brink in the middle of the ring and shocks the smaller man by immediately shooting in for a double-leg takedown. Brink ends up slipping under the bottom ropes and the referee orders a restart. The two men miss a striking exchange and grapple standing with McGee again scoring a takedown on a back-leg trip. McGee grabs an inside cradle, preventing Brink from pulling full-guard where he'd best be able to use his Gracie-schooled jiu-jitsu against the freakish giant. In a plodding flash, McGee swing one giraffe-like leg over Brink's torso and gets the full mount. After only a handful of none-too-violent-appearing punches, Brink taps out to your winner at 2:48, GAN MCGEE!

Since this night of action, Gan McGee has made a big splash in MMA with his stunning upset TKO of Pedro Rizzo at UFC39, and more recently appeared in the PRIDE ring where he lost a close decision to Heath Herring. Aaron Brink has also engaged in several *hundred* one-on-one matches, all of them intergender, as he has largely left the world of fighting to pursue a career as a porn star under the moniker "Dick Delaware". Discovered while having sex in the kitchen during a party, "Dick" made his professional debut in that seminal classic, 'Cum Drippers Part 4' and has done more than 200 'scenes' since then. All of the skanky porn tail in the world can't make him forget that for one brilliant night under the watchful eye of Mark Hall, it was Brink who played the bitch to Gan McGee's studly leading man. Speech impediments, sticks, striking, and smut – Hall's "Cobra Challenge" excels on all fronts for an exciting evening of mediocre fighting. We watch it so you don't have to, only here at YOUR Death Valley Driver!

~!~

12-Pack of a Comp. Full of Old School Some Old Fool Sent Me - Part TWO

(by RAVEN MACK)

Greg Valentine/Brutus Beefcake (with Luscious Johnny Valiant) vs. The British Bulldogs
Hey, I hate the WWF, especially with Mean Gene Okerlund and Gorilla Monsoon on commentary, but if the internet wrestling community has taught me anything, it's that I should suck the Dynamite Kid's limp wheelchair dick, so this may be the best thing I've ever seen, ever, at any time in my life. Whoa - this is Wrestlemania and Ozzy Osbourne is ringside with the Bulldogs. Dynamite Kid is motherfuckin' killer, especially that snap suplex of super destruction, but goddamn, he and Davey Boy are so small, yet so top heavy with the muscles like an action figure, how could you not think they were shooting the steroids on the daily? You look at Valentine's arms, and he's strong as well, but his shape is a carrying cinderblocks around type thick, with the natural flab and curves of a natural human being. Smith and Dynamite are the chiseled fighting dreamboys of McMahon's afternoon masturbatory fantasies. Hey, maybe I'll start drinking a fat, memorial guzzle of this Old Milwaukee for every dead wrestler I see here on this tape, which would mean one for Davey Boy Smith. Cheers, you dead, wife-beating, drug addict who once wore braided hair extensions as a short-and-long cut. There's a part in the middle of this match where Valentine and Dynamite go at it for a while, and these guys are two different styles of master professional wrestlers - the late '70s Hammer vs. the new school '80s Dynamite, and it bums me that they have to be cluttered up with Beefcake and Davey Boy and

Albano and Valiant, because I could watch the fuck out of these two being all deliberately subtle with each other. Thus far, Beefcake has been relegated to standing on the apron or interfering when necessary to establish the fact he and his partner are the assholes here today, which is good, because he sucks. The less of him, the better. Actually, just then, Davey Boy is in front of Beefcake in an armlock, and he grabs Beefcake's head for what appears to be a snapmare, kicks high in the air, and Beefcake pushes him off to make him land right on his brain; that was great stuff. Valentine pulls up Smith before a three-count, and then Davey Boy slams the Hammer into Dynamite Kid's skull, shooting the Kid off the apron onto the floor, visually and literally sacrificing himself for the great finish, and Hammer is loopy in the ring. I should get somebody to send me all the good old WWF shit, because I always just blocked it out to simplify my life from getting angry at Hillbilly Jim and Hulk Hogan crap.

Well fuck me standing up while speaking of the devil, here's Mean Gene Okerlund talking to Hulk Hogan, who's training for his match against King Kong Bundy, with the help of Hillbilly Jim. They play clips of Bundy and Magnificent Muraco working over Hogan, rolling him over for fat-man splashes that make you wear gauze around your waist when lifting weights later in the promotional clip.

Hulk Hogan vs. King Kong Bundy (with Bobby Heenan)

This is that Wrestlemania II (which was just a regular number, and not a Roman numeral back then) cage match, and since you probably know all about this, I'd like to instead tangentize about cage matches. There seem to be two schools of cage match philosophy - one where the object is to escape the cage before your opponent, and the second being use the cage as an implement of destruction to contuse and abuse your most hated of all enemies with. I don't understand the former's thinking, as if this is the be-all end-all grudge match, why would you want to simply escape the cage instead of maiming the other guy (unless of course, you're trying to save your own precious main of beautiful hair, which holds your strength, because it's long, and that shit's Biblical (7), and lucha libre, which is easily the most Biblically-based wrestling on this planet; how much you want to bet that little fuckin' Mars Rover had a Bible on it, insidious Christian bastards running this country)? Hogan is athletic-taped to the ropes, and Bundy meanders his way towards the open cage door, but Hogan catches him in the most godawful cage match I've ever seen. Bundy gets thrown into the cage, and while he blades himself, Heenan reaches through the cage to cover Bundy's head to further conceal the gig from the seven thousand cameras ringside. At least, even in this god-forsaken abomination against wrestling's cage match, they consummated the violence with some blood. Vince McMahon's not afraid to consummate long-term contracts with his daughter's vagina, but he's certainly been afraid, for the most part during his business history, to bring the blood, which makes the simulated violence seem more real, plus seem more awesome. (BEER EIGHT)

If I can, just once, use the art of the blade to get out of a day of work, I'd die a happy man. I mean, basically, I'm working an angle every time I call in sick, because I've probably actually been physically ill maybe 5% of the time I've ever not gone to work. So what would be the difference in lying on the phone and just stopping about half a mile from work, slicing my forehead open, and showing up looking like Steve Corino after putting Dusty Rhodes over?

Nothing; it's all a work. By the time I got home, the bleeding would have stopped, and I could drink beer all day long, just like Tommy Rich.

Hogan wins, beats up Heenans, and has skin browner than the dirty maids I masturbate to on my internet machine. "This is the wrestling match of the decade," says some celebrity woman commentator, probably straight off a notecard, as Hogan poses around the ring.

Wahoo McDaniel vs. Tully Blanchard (with J.J. Dillon)

Wahoo's dead, and I won't drink a bullshit let's-make-a-wrestling-review-joke drink like I did for Davey Boy Smith, because Wahoo McDaniel is straight out my upraising, on my TV, and all Manny Fernandez had to do to get over was to not back down from Wahoo; he's the motherfuckin' man. It was Wahoo who got wrestling's blood regulated in a lot of places, because after a match in Philadelphia with Jimmy Garvin during one of the Great American Bash tours, he got inspected by the official doctor and the official doctor found the razor blade sliver used to juice one's head stuck inside the scar tissue of Wahoo McDaniel. I can only imagine the Ronnie Dobbs-esque stories Wahoo told that M.D. once he saw the egghead was shocked at the discovery... "Aww shit, I got in a barfight last night in Baltimore and some dude tried to cut me and I broke his wrist and that was just left in my head." "Damn doc, you should've seen what they took out my forehead in Greensboro last week." "Hey doc, I've got a really hot young girl back at the Marriott waiting in the jacuzzi, and I've got to get on the road by sun-up to make Cleveland in time to call this girl I know up there, too...so are you gonna stitch me up so I can finish this six-pack and get the hell out of here, or are you gonna be a dick about all this?" Tully Blanchard, in his own right, was one of the great under-appreciated heels of all-time. In a fair world, Blanchard and Magnum T.A. would've recreated all their battles again, but even more furious, on the brighter stage of a main event NWA World Heavyweight title feud program.

Wahoo is one helluva a fuckin' puncher, as well as chopper across the forehead, and Tully is a gold medal staggering heel as well, so this is working well so far, this here World Television title, meaning people all around the planet are plugging portable TVs into car batteries to see this, from Ghana to Sri Lanka and all the way down to whatever the fuck's at the bottom of South America, if they have car batteries down there. (BEER NINE) Tully used a foreign object, and Ronnie Garvin pointed this out to Tommy Young, but Tully kept his TV title and J.J. Dillon is hugging it as they walk away from the ring.

The Road Warriors vs. The Midnight Express (Condry & Eaton variety with Jim Cornette)

Growing up, I thought the replacement of Dennis Condrey with Stan Lane was wonderful, because Lane and Bobby Eaton came up with new maneuvers every week, and looking back that seems to be the budding smart mark in me, choosing flashy unseen-before technique over the bandana'd meat-and-potatoes heartiness of Loverboy Dennis Condrey. The story being told here is the Road Warriors are unbeatable behemoths, and the Midnight Express has to outsmart them. Condrey, however, gets bludgeoned by Animal for the first few minutes, running a series of spots, each one ending with Condrey exiting the ring, and each time he's closer and closer, both physically and in his attitude, towards going back to the locker room, as in fuck this match. While circling the ring, Condrey fakes Animal pulling his hair from the outside, which allows him

to cheat to win, which was great, but remember, Hawk doesn't sell shit at this point, so he headbutts Condrey.

Hey, there's an All-time Gospel Favorites commercial here in the middle, and it's pretty much Andrae Crouch and his family and one or two Al Green songs. You think when that woman threw them hot grits on Al Green to make him find the Lord that one night, you think she put butter on them grits before she threw them on him? (9)

Back to our match, and the Road Warriors basically are destroying the Midnight Express, who pause long enough in agony to get the crowd riled up with delight, and that's the premise of this match thus far. I can see why Hawk and Animal sucked, because if they never show weakness, it never allows you to get the upper-hand. Hawk finally misses a kneedrop from the second rope, rolls out the ring, and gets nailed with the tennis racket by Dennis Condrey, giving the Midnights a chance to shine. DOUBLE THRUST PUNCH BY LOVERBOY DENNIS! I love that move, and shit, Hawk's dead in real life, so I'll drink to his non-selling steroid ass as well. Is Dennis Condrey still alive? They break into a four-way melee, and Cornette enters and hits Animal with the racket, and Tommy Young sees it and calls for the DQ, and even if you loaded a tennis racket with enriched uranium, how much damage would it really do? Paul Ellering chases Cornette post-match, leading him into Baby Doll's right fist. I wonder if Baby Doll is still alive? She was the Chyna of her wrestling generation – an Amazonian woman of questionable beauty we were trained to hate at first, and then love all up on, which is the exact opposite of how I usually chemically react with the womenfolk.

Terry & Hoss Funk (with Jimmy Hart) vs. Tito Santana/The Junkyard Dog

Terry's still in regular brief-style trunks, and Hoss is not called Dory and still has a touch of hair on his head. JYD is still alive (I drink one) and Tito Santana is as uninteresting to me as ever. Terry Funk does a lot of staggering and falling things that no one else has ever done in wrestling quite so well. At one point very early on, he reaches for JYD in the ring while Dory is legal, they move, and Terry falls over the top rope, which comically relieves the situation by having the bad guy fall on his fuckin' face, but also shows just how much he wants to clutch the throat of that yellow-bellied scoundrel the Funks are facing off against.

(BEER TEN) Terry Funk breaks up a pin attempt by Santana, and rolls under Santana in the physical aftermath, and actually clutches Santana's legs as Tito tries to get off of this straddling position, to show Tito, "Hey, at least punch me in the fuckin' face once or twice, you stupid asshole. We are trying to have a wrestling match, ya know." Jimmy Hart yelling on a megaphone gives me the strange desire to buy ten rings for a dollar and try to win a giant stuffed Pooh bear with fetal alcohol syndrome eyes. Terry Funk has a table flipped over on him, he pulls it up and clutches it for a second, like it landed there, then throws it off like a mad man. I imagine his real-life emotions are just as sporadic and unpredictable and can only be calmed by Coors Light longnecks, which I'm sure his pretty young wife keeps on hand in abundance to keep from getting "branded". In the match, this is the WWF, so megaphone shenanigans leads to a Funk family victory. JYD can headbutt motherfuckers all night long, but the handle end of a

megaphone knocks him unconscious. I don't have a lot of intelligence, but it's insulted, again and again, by this sports entertainment tomfoolery.

Terry Taylor promo montage

"Freeze Frame" by the J. Geils Band, Terry Taylor dropkicking fools in the ring, tricking his way around an Olympic-sized swimming pool, and wearing a suit to a photo shoot...this combo has been put on like four different tapes for me from people who'd like to think they know me...and I always enjoy it, especially the part with that weird stretch car that I can't remember the name of but I saw like seven of in the Old Car Trader last month.

Buzz Sawyer (with Rick Steiner) vs. Terry Taylor (with Chavo Guerrero, the original version)
Taylor comes out in a satin jacket, which is a retro style I bet never comes back, because you can take off your stupid ironic trucker hat pretty easily when you roll into a room full of for-real people who'll put you at the bottom rung of the "bikers stare at rednecks who are laughing at the hippies" line from that David Allan Coe song, but satin jackets don't come off so easily. Michael Hayes is doing color with Jim Ross, and these are different times, so Michael Hayes mocks Chavo Guerrero's Mexican heritage constantly, calling him "taco vendor". Steiner and Guerrero get to punching ringside, Taylor small packages Sawyer for the win and the title, and I absolutely love how the house lights used to come on when a match was over; it made it seem extremely conclusive.

The Shepherders (with Jack Victory) vs. The Fantastics

More signs of the times a-changing. You put two pretty dudes in glittery Chippendales outfits, and throw two drunk guys in camo pants, and slap them all in a wrestling ring, and the American public is not going to cheer for the Fantastics 99 times out of 100 in the year 2004 – guaranteed. Grunge music ruined everything. (BEER ELEVEN) "You kill the head and the body will follow," says Bill Watts on commentary within this match, and I think I should probably tattoo that somewhere on my body, but not my head. I basically didn't pay attention, but the Fantastics became champions of the tag team variety, UWF American style, jack. And they celebrated to Jimmy Garvin's music that makes me want to Fargo strut around the jobsite when it comes on the classic rock radio.

Eliminator is one of the worst ZZ Top records ever, though the most played on MTV because they had those kooky videos. For more information on how Billy Gibbons making music while doing drugs is your motherfuckin' God, you should consult the used LP bins of your local record store, and buy anything by ZZ Top recorded before 1978. And don't just get Tres Hombres; everybody has that shit, because of "La Grange". Your delinquent desires would be much better served with Rio Grande Mud or ZZ Top's First Album or even Tejas. It's all good porch music, which nobody makes anymore. Used to be a guy like Dick Slater could find a willing woman to sit in lawn chairs on the porch all day long, listening to Tejas, laughing at "Arrested for Driving While Blind", and then eat some animal cooked on the grill and fuck upstairs in the bedroom. Nowadays, a guy like Dick Slater shares a one-level apartment with some crazy bitch who kicks him out and causes him to stab her with a steak knife when he's just trying to get his good pair of jeans and his favorite Brew-Thru shirt. Then he goes to jail, and gets judged by a thousand

internet people who don't know what that woman did before she got stabbed with a steak knife. She might've told Dick that the miscarriage she had was from his friend, not him; or she might've said not only did he have to not come back to the apartment but he had to pay half the bills, too; or who knows what the fuck she said? I've only physically struck one woman in my life, because I was raised better than that. But you know what? The one woman I struck used to poke holes in our condoms so she could trick me into getting her pregnant...no shit. We lived on a block in Richmond that was notorious for it's transvestite prostitutes, and I would come home and there'd be my clothes on the porch (ground level) with transvestites picking through them because she threw my shit out, to get back at me for whatever it was in her head that I did wrong. I'd like to hope that there's still some transvestite hooker running around Grace and Allen in Richmond wearing my glow-in-the-dark Metal Up Yer Ass Metallica shirt from back in the day. And even then, with that crazy bitch, I only choked her once, when she followed me around our three rooms twice through all of them, when I was telling her to leave me alone. I choked that bitch for like ten seconds, she passed out, but when she opened her eyes, she said, "Real good, Raven, make me black out," and went right back to the bitching at me, so I don't know if she was working me or it was legit. But I knew to never hit her again, because it wasn't going to solve anything, and if I fucked her stupid ass up, it was only going to make things worse for me legally and wasn't going to put any sensibility into her. Maybe Dick Slater was dealing with an even crazier bitch. Or maybe he is an asshole. I really don't give a fuck; I'm just not necessarily condemning the man for stabbing some woman with a steak knife, because every man should be innocent until proven guilty.

Hacksaw Duggan vs. Dick Slater

Well, there's Dirty Dick himself, on my television screen. Duggan pummels Slater and Dick does a wonderful tumble out the ring followed with a falling face plant over the ringside rail, right in front of some fans. Slater gets up and throws some chairs in the ring, then stalls stalls stalls, like any good main event heel should do. Slater, when on the offense, does a lot of moves that get aurally punctuated by a knee stomp to the mat rather than the normal professional wrestling foot stomp. Slater slaps on a "sleephold" as the commentator says it, and it continues to amaze me that a man can seemingly only pull off the third raising of his arm while in that infamously dreaded brain-clutch. (BEER ELEVEN) You'd think the blood flow to the brain would only lessen with those precious seconds. Duggan ends up winning the match, and then Jim Ross is talking things in front of a terribly mid-'80s background.

a couple musical promos

Fuck, they've got that "Birdman" song by Morris Day, plus video clippage of Koko B. Ware from Memphis, and I really don't need a long-standing wrestling gimmick based on one song by a Prince protégé, unless of course it's some hot woman wrestler dressing like a slut like all Prince's female protégés did.

Okay, this is probably the most bizarre matching of music and clips ever, as I'm somehow hearing "Roll Over Beethoven" by Chuck Berry's crazy young ass while watching video highlights of Nick Bockwinkel. Yep, that Nick Bockwinkel. Whoever saw some Bockwinkel highlights and thought, "Let's put this crazy motherfuckin' early rock-n-roll nonsense on with it," is a strange man. After the clips, Bockwinkel is sitting with his belt, and a young Jim

Belushi-looking Larry Zbysko is talking smack at him. Zbysko's whole shit-talking is based on Bockwinkel taking the belt handed to him when, I'm assuming from memory, Stan Hansen had to forfeit the title when he drooled tobacco juice on Verne Gagne's wife's pussy. And Bockwinkel cuts a wonderful promo about "when you sign a contract, as a professional, you are agreeing to do combat..." and so on. It's great, and then Zbysko comes out with some nunchakus and threatens bodily harm, but Bockwinkel doesn't care; and then the cherry on top is when they go to commercial, it's a shot of a toy AWA wrestling ring with the toy Larry Zbysko doll standing in the middle of it, looking as much like the real thing as a paper mache Rob Zombie would look like me.

Stan Hansen vs. Curt Hennig

Hansen is supposed to wrestle Crusher Jerry Blackwell, who is in the ring in all brown earth-tone street clothes, and Hansen is pissed because he has to defend against a guy he didn't prepare for, which in the context of real athletic combat, is completely understandable. Hansen beats on Blackwell's bum leg until Curt Hennig comes to the rescue, then he beats on Curt Hennig. Stan Hansen is great because he's blind and might knock your eyeball out your head if he's not careful. Drink for dead Hennig. Hansen is a great seller of imagined pain, in addition to his reknowned ability of being viciously stiff. Hennig layers some really nice punches on Hansen's ass while climbing back into the ring at one spot. But Hansen takes back over and nails a piledriver, but Hennig's leg is slopped across the bottom rope. Holy fuck, Hennig does a mulekick; nobody does that shit anymore, or even back then. It ends up with a time limit draw, because the point was to make Hennig look awesome as fuck without compromising how greatly destructive Stan Hansen already had been.

The Missing Link vs. Tim Horner

I think this is one of those ESPN Classics matches or something, because I've seen this before, and the Missing Link is one of those guys that was really scary in the wrestling magazines, but when you saw him in a match, he wasn't the monster heel he probably should've been with green face paint and a Mongolian mohawk he held back to maximize the skull impact of his self-destructive diving headbutt from the top rope.

Freebirds promo, where Michael Hayes talks his smooth wildness, calling Terry Gordy, "the best wrestler in the Universe," which technically was true because he was holding the UWF title; then he passes the promo to Gordy who talks violence real quick before passing to the exclamation point of Buddy Roberts, that little curly-haired conjunction junction who did and would pull it all together and make it seem unfair they had a third guy who wasn't a weaselly manager type but a bona fide wrassler of the first old school order. Or something.

Terry Gordy (with Michael Hayes) vs. Steve Williams

(BEER TWELVE) This is the semi-final round of the UWF title tourney, and I imagine it's going to be great, though I might've seen this before, but since I can't remember specifically, it's all new to me. They start up with a headlock by Gordy, but Williams throws him across the room, showing Doc's power since Gordy was the monster of the Freebirds, but also showing Williams don't give a fuck. Williams gets the same on Gordy in the next lock-up, and Gordy crotches Doc,

because he's not honorable at all. Gordy slaps on a scorpion deathlock, far before Sting made that his signature reverse figure four Venice Beach crab hold. I guess it's the sharpshooter, too, but like I said, I ignore WWF. And just as the match is getting good, they do the old second-interference-which-brings-the-punches-of-the-face-while-the-heel-pulls-brass-knucks-out-of-his-trunks gimmick. Game over.

Terry Gordy vs. Steve Williams

I bought a Best of UWF and a Best of the Fabulous Freebirds tape at a wrestling show in Hamlet, North Carolina, one time; it was supposed to be Buddy Landel's retirement match, and two dudes powerbombed each other onto the tape table during a match early on in the card. But I was still stupid enough to drop like thirty bucks on some tapes that got smashed earlier on, including the two above mentioned, both of which were horrible quality. That weekend, me and my man Boomer stayed in a hotel in Rockingham and got accosted by crackheads for the second night in a row, and I was trying to get this short-haired redneck girl who worked at the Huddle House to come over and party, but the Bubba Sparxxx-looking cook wasn't having it at all, not even for a second. Buddy Landel got a plaque that night, Ricky Morton got five bucks a Polaroid (to benefit the Children's Miracle Network, like every shady washed-up wrestler's Polaroids do), and all I got was a couple of shitty tapes I can't hardly watch, ever.

In this Gordy vs. Williams rematch, it looks like the UWF afforded a bigger ring, because they have a large amount of space to work in this one, and when they punch each other center ring, it seems much more devastating. Gordy Southern whips Williams into the corner and the top turnbuckle breaks off, and I'd like to think that was sheer super destruction, though the internet nerd in me assumes they worked that shit to break at the proper time. Nah, it was real, because some dude is trying to fix it while the match continues. Drink one for dead Super Destructor Gordy. Williams backdrops Gordy over the top rope, but the ref asks if it was intentional, which of course, it never is, and Michael Hayes leaves his announcing position to go talk shit ringside to Tommy Gilbert, head UWF referee. Bill Watts comes ringside as well, to counter Hayes. When a dude has his mentor ringside during a title match in the professional wrestling, he never loses. And Williams doesn't. Watts counts three in lieu of a knocked-out ref, and the Freebirds get knocked around like the Three Stooges a couple of times.

Then there's an Eddie Gilbert vs. Bill Watts match interrupted so that Gordy can slap the Oriental Spike on him for nine minutes, and the most devastating paralysis-inducing moves come from the Orient, because those motherfuckers learned ninja and know how to manipulate your nerves so that you bleed from your mouth and can't walk anymore.

Fantastics video promo

I'm gonna pretend I don't see this Fantastics video thing with ZZ Top's "Gimme All Your Lovin'" as the soundtrack, because it makes me want to watch firefighter movies. The great thing about being Raven Mack is if you google search my name, gay porn comes up on the first page of results.

The Shepherders (with Jack Victory) vs. Koko B. Ware/Chavo Guerrero

At this point, Guerrero and Ware were glorified jobbers in the UWF, and even though I don't know what's going to happen at all, I would guarantee you somehow the Fantastics become involved. Luke Williams was always the superior Sheepherder, and they never had the violent resolve to destroy their enemies without Jonathon Boyd. Chavo bridges a pin attempt on Williams, and Jack Victory nails a terribly fake blow with the flag pole, and the Sheepherders win.

"Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer vs. Hacksaw Duggan

For the North American title from the first Jim Crockett Memorial Cup, this is a match. I am a drunk, both the wrestlers are cokeheads, and they punch each other. Duggan has gauze around his beer belly, which usually means in wrestling that a fat man belly-splashed him three or four times the week before. But Duggan wins because evil is never rewarded during supercards where people have to pay big money to look at it happen.

The Fantastics vs. The Freebirds

Wow, Erik Watts is doing commentary, and says, in a monotone manner, "When he comes to the ring, he comes loaded for bears," and weird homosexual innuendos bounce around my perverted head (10). Roberts and Rogers start, and when Rogers takes over, it's double tag time. Michael Hayes does a moonwalk, and Bobby Fulton shakes his ass at Hayes, and the crowd cheers, and why does wrestling have to be so homoerotic this late at night after so many beers?

Damn, I'm not focusing well, so let's assume that the Fantastics won when they weren't booked to do so, and backstage, Buddy Roberts got Michael Hayes' daughter pregnant, so Hayes left the UWF to be a piece of shit hype-man in the WWF so that he could pay for an abortion since he didn't want to be the granddad of Buddy Jack Roberts Jr., and plus Terry Gordy told him (Hayes) that he looked too pussy to get a good gig in Japan, even though Victor Quinones was booking over there back then, I think. But Buddy Jack Roberts Jr. was born alive, not aborted, and he died his hair black to hide his true roots, and he grew in dog years to become Sabu, and throw fireballs in the face of conventional wrestling, and eventually the conventional wrestling community, harbored on the internet while they looked for a profitable homeland in real life, turned on Sabu, and said he wasn't the most awesomeness motherfucker ever, because conventional thinking doesn't understand, much less even comprehend the real deal holy fields. Yeah. And it does stop. Right here.

~!~

WORLD ENTERTAINMENT WRESTLING - THE KODO FUYUKI FAREWELL SHOW

(5/18/2003)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I get bored with US indies. I never get bored with useless Japanese indie sleaze.

Steve Corino vs. Shinjuku Same

Shinjuku Same has a boxer boy gimmick and I hates me a guy who wrestles in boxing gloves. Corino throws better punches despite not having gloves on. Corino chokes the punk with tape

and Same BOXES TO TRANSITION and misses the Carlos Palimino(1) Hurricanrana but rana's out of Corino's Running Powerbomb and then throws these Johnny B Badd vs Maxx Muscle-level shitty boxing haymakers. He does hit the HIGHLY RICH David Bey(2) Memorial Moonsault. The Jerry Quarry(3)-esque Shining Wizard leads up to boxing boy making with a Bart Gunn left for an eight count. Corino with the Superkick to transition and out goes Shinjuku with the Corino VERTICAL SUPLEX. This match was GOOFY, folks.

Mitsuhiro Matsunaga/Jun Kasai vs. Bad Boy Hido/Gosaku Goshogawara:

This is a DEATH MATCH! BED OF NAILS is brought out. Goshogawara is the SLEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEZIEST looking wrestler in the history of Japanese Indie Wrestling(4) - looking like the Japanese version of the guy driving the recycling truck around your neighborhood every Thursday. Hido and Jun Kasai brawl a bit while Goshogawara is a fucking freak and goes shoulder first into the barbed-wire pit from the apron. Matsunaga is completely immobile but kicks Goshogawara in the chest a bit as they GO INTO A SOUTHERN TAG MATCH? Okay. Gosaku Throws Kasai Into The Bed Of Nails To TRANSITION into Hido carving him up with a barbed-wire baseball bat. Goshogawara hits the Fistdrop So Shitty That Liquid Plumber Won't Break It Up- but Kasai is your face in peril and the nearfall is getting the rubes off their hands. Hido staples a little piece of paper to Kasai's head(5) in a slight variation on the Southern Tag Halving Of The Ring. Hido with the Post-Stapling Lariat for Two. Matsunaga blows the psychology by fighting with Goshogawara in the ring while Kasai and Hido brawl to the floor. Matsunaga does some kicking. Kasai kicks a running Hido in the stomach and makes his first comeback with a Vertical Suplex through a barbed-wire pit. Meanwhile, Matsunaga does the completely STUPIDLY BALLS OUT Russian Legsweep onto the Bed Of Nails.(6) Goshogawara suplexes Matsunaga into the barbedwire eventually and Kasai suplexes Goshogawara into the barbed wire and hits a Frog Splash for two until Hido piledrives Kasai and it keeps on a going. Goshogawara takes a fucking NASTY powerbomb by Matsunaga onto the bed of nails and Matsunaga wins with the overly fancy Crucifix Rollup. Postmatch Hido and Goshogawara yell about the shitty bitches and shitty crank they have in WEW. Or something.

Tatsuhito Takaiwa vs. Chocoball Mukai:

Ah sweet Chocoball(7). This is Takaiwa from last year, when he ruled. He's back to sucking dick again now for some reason. Takaiwa chops early. Takaiwa stomps him early. Takaiwa stiffly lariats early. Chocoball does a super slo-mo version of that shitty standing submission that Konan did in WCW. And a spinning DDT. And a rolling senton off the top. Takaiwa goes on offense with a Superplex and they start no-selling lariats. They trade finishers for a while and your eyes glaze over for the psychological clarity of the death match you just saw. A Death Valley Driver later and Takaiwa begins his descent into wrestling hell....

Shinjiro Otani vs. Taka Michinoku:

Talk about two guys who have been from here to eternity. Here, they meet on a card that is the corpse of FMW.(8) I'm tired of seeing these two wrestle since they've diverged both physically and stylistically from the New Japan Junior and quasi-New Japan Junior roots. TAKA does pull off the Springboard Plancha to the floor - but it's more lardlike now. Ohtani's face scrapes never get old and TAKA's double dropkick to the face in the corner is perfectly fine. I dunno. It's just so

fucking heatless and random. They're both good and competent but I really don't like either of these guys unless there is something meaningful in the match(9): TAKA vs Minoru Tanaka was the last TAKA match I gave a shit about and I can't even remember when that was. The last Shinjiro Ohtani match I dug was Zero-One tag match against Mr Gannesukke and W*ING Kanemura - and that had a lot to do with Ohtani going back to selling a HORRENDOUS beatdown like a NJ Junior babyface in 1995. And Mr Gannesukke being so fucking great. This match has it's moments as the fight for the ropes after TAKA procures his Crippler Crossface heats up Shinjiro fucking KILLING TAKA with a Dropkick counter to a missile dropkick into a gnarley Released Dragon into a FUCKING GHASTLY Rotation Powerbomb.(10)

Jado/Gedo vs. Dick Togo/Ikuto Hidaka:

Ah here ya go. They join this in progress to irritate me. Togo and Gedo are fun together as you would assume - being the same size, being completely immersed in flawless psychology but not afraid to fill their matches with actual hatred and bloodlust, like good wrestling should have. Hidaka and Gedo work from an armbar and Gedo is sells it like he is in a high school gym in Alabama in 1979. DICK punches him in the kidneys and dropkicks him and lays into a sleeper. Gedo fights to a vertical base and hits the ropes and DICK lariats to cut him off and Dick Togo goes back to the shoulder. Hidaka dropkicks the shoulder and procures the chicken wing and we have a real-life tagteam wrestling match on our hands. Dick Togo keeps cutting off Gedo until Gedo hits a fucking BEAUTIFUL DiBiase Powerslam and makes the tag. Jado is a house a-fire knocking Hidaka to the floor and reversing out of Dick Togo's ankle lock. Dick Togo and Gedo throw the greatest fucking Murdock punches since Dick Murdock threw punches and it fucking rules. Gedo takes more of an assbeating and catches Hidaka with an elbow. Hidaka cuts him off and does a fabulous roll into a kneebar that Gedo sells like a fucking KING until Jado makes the save off the floor. Gedo and Jado hit the Fuyuki Force Superbomb to set up Gedo's Superfly Splash for the win. That's a good little batch of professional wrestling.

Akira Taue/Daisuke Ikeda/Naomichi Marufuji vs. Mitsuharu Misawa/Yoshinari Ogawa/Kotaro Suzuki:

This is basically the Golden Age All Japan guys showing their respect for Kodo Fuyuki. Taue and Misawa wrestle a little. Taue doesn't use his two allotted good performances a year on this match.(11) Daisuke Ikeda will always show up though and he and Ogawa pelt each other pretty well for a minute there. Marufuchi comes in and he and Kentaro Suzuki fly around a bit in an annoying manner. Kentaro Suzuki's 619 is really shitty but Marufuji Endless Hangtime Missile Dropkick is still fucking boss. And they kinda end it abruptly with the Shewy-Newy and there ya go. So. The frickin Hido match has more effort exerted than the Misawa match? Yes. Yes it did. That sucks.

Masato Tanaka vs. Tetsuhiro Kuroda:

Awwwwwww, Kuroda was beloved by internet wrestling dorks like myself for a minute there.(12) Now he isn't beloved. Masato Tanaka is the same wrestler he was in 1998. (HEY! 12!) This will be fun since they are both FMW alumni who developed careers after escaping the endless 90s shadow of Atsushi Onita. Kuroda is a Chosyu knock-off and Tanaka is Misawa knock-off so this is sleazarific- like Big Slam Vader vs Vic Steamboat. The crowd digs the stalemate takedown

section and they lock up. Tanaka hits the ropes and hits the armdrag and after a stalemate, takes Kuroda down. Kuroda slams Tanaka's leg against the ringpost and Hulk Hogan would be embarrassed to show that much daylight. Kuroda procures the Figure Four and Tanaka rolls it over and Kuroda reverses it back and this would be interesting if either were selling anything in a compelling manner. Kuroda with a DDT on the floor and he does a Muta sprinting lariat and I'm glazing over. Tanaka just kinda goes on offense and does a running chairshot into the corner leading to Tanaka trying to snap Kuroda's spindly neck. Kuroda is cutoff with a Spear and Tanaka kicks him quite a bit and they trade knife-edge chops. Kuroda no-sells a Roaring Elbow- not just buy not falling down, but by the expression on his face where he is trying to remember what to do next. God, Kuroda really sucks now. Kuroda sells a Capture Suplex like he is Larry and Tanaka is a younger, Japanese Moe. Tanaka's frog splash for two. Kuroda with the Locomotion Germans TO TRANSITION~! and we await the Lariat for two. They trade two counts for a while. I think about maybe getting another freezer pop. They sell nothing every other move and it really sucks. "This time it's two count. Next time it doesn't affect me!" Tanaka gets off a supersloppy Toprope Gutwrench annnnnnd they do five more preposterous nearfalls and no sell a few more Released Germans. Kuroda hits a Shining Wizard FOR TWO! Facebuster FOR TWO! Lariat FOR TWO! ROARING ELBOW FOR TWO! And thank GOD the forty-third Roaring Elbow does the trick and we can get on with our lives.

Shinya Hashimoto vs. Kintaro Kanemura:

This match makes up for the death match Hash and Fuyuki were planning to have before Fuyuki lost his own personal death match with cancer. Fuyuki's widow brings his ashes to the ring and it's pretty fucking intense when I think about it. W*ING Kanemura does the Team No Respect dance listlessly, heavy from the loss of Kodo Fuyuki. Hashimoto hits the ring hellbent on making his fallen comrade proud. He is ready to beat the living dogshit out of Kintaro Kanemura. Hashimoto takes the ashes of Kodo Fuyuki and DIVES BACKWARDS INTO THE EXPLODING BARBED WIRE - AS IF KODO FUYUKI'S FIGHTING SPIRIT WAS IN THE RING - and the barbed wire EXPLODES in a huge ball of flame AND HIS WIDOW AND SISTER START CRYING. Hashimoto hands it to Kanemura and he DIVES BACKWARDS and the barbed wire explodes and Kanemura bows in front of Hashimoto. I start to cry at the manly beauty of the gesture.(13) Hashimoto prays and they ring the bell. The praying is over, the killings begun. Hashimoto just beats the living shit out of Kanemura - kicks to the face, chops and STRAIGHT fucking punches to the face, a fucking HELLISH full body weight Elbow Drop. Kanemura finally sends Hashimoto into the barbed wire and starts beating on him with a baseball bat. They carry out Fuyuki's widow. Kanemura lariats him to the ground and keeps driving the barbedwire baseball bat into Hash's throat. Hash gets back to his feet and just starts kicking the living fuck out of Kanemura and throws him into the previously exploded barbed wire. He then throws him into barbed wire that explodes and hits a DDT for two. Fuyuki's widow has returned. Hash hits a fucking SKULLCRUSHING DDT and it's over. Kanemura look legit destroyed. Hashimoto bows before Kodo Fuyuki's ashes and Goddamn was that weird.

~!~

A LETTER TO PHIL SCHNEIDER

Hello Phil,

It was great seeing you Easter's Eve(1). Wish we could have been touched by the presence of your beloved by I understand that familial obligations come first and foremost. I hope the brunch went well- the shadroe and mimosa's by the James River (2), you are stepping into your adult life with grace and ease and that is all I could want for you my friend- the chaos of youth switches into glide (3) and you see the rest of the picture and your new values start setting in.

I was glad to have you and to watch some of the wrestling videos you had been talking so highly of as of late. I know that you and young Tom have a bit more time at your disposal and I am glad you act as a wrestling filter and could present the five or six matches that had captured your collective fancy and I must say that I share your collective enthusiasm for almost every match you said was worthy of viewing. (4) I would rank them THUSLY:

- Hashimoto vs Masato Tanaka: Tanaka is super game taking the full force and fury of Hashimoto's mauling offense. I loved when Tanaka is against the ropes and Hashimoto tees off and crushes him with just ungodly stiff kicks. Tanaka's offense is still too much Misawa-worship and second rate in that aspect, but Hashimoto brings out the greatness in the match with the stiffness and intensity and Tanaka sells it like Ricky Morton in a maximum security prison. great fucking match.

- American Dragon vs AJ Styles: I would put this first but I REALLY think that American Dragon could have just as good of a match against Rico Suave in Puerto Rico or against Frey Tormenta Jr in a church basement in Fresno. American Dragon is revolutionary. He is a fucking hurricane of wrestling. He is the focus of this match and in this match AJ Styles wrestles about as well as he ever has- which is saying quite a bit because Styles has had some surprisingly good matches. It doesn't really matter here- Dragon is the vessel and wine. the alpha and the omega, the best wrestler in the world. This is better than the other ROH match they had- which I had as my match of the year from the US last year- in that AJ Styles is even better in this match and American Dragon is even BETTER in this one at making it a completely shootstyle affair but with a Peak Of BattleARTS merger of shootstyle with complete Memphis psychology. American Dragon is brilliant. (5)

- Naoya Ogawa vs Bill Goldberg: This match is fucking great. Goldberg's offense is truly man-sized for once. Ogawa sells the assbeating like a true king- and I want when Ogawa started being Murakami-esque in his masterful pro-style-via-shootstyle greatness of psychology. The ref bump is waaay too long but I can't overlook the bizarre goodness present in this match to bitch about the booking. Ogawa? OGAWA! Wild.

- Solar/Dos Caras Jr vs Kaz Hayashi/ Satoshi Kojima: Solar is so fucking awesome. He and Kaz have a EMLL 1997 Solar vs Altraman Jr mat section that makes you believe in the power of lucha. Lucha is about grace and beauty and Solar on the mat and Kaz hanging like a

motherfucker with him is about as graceful as wrestling gets. Dos Caras Jr wrestles exactly like Edge. Exactly like Edge. Kojima wrestles just like A-Train. Just like A-Train. I takes giant steps down when the divine Solar and divine Kaz Hayashi relenquish the rein of the match.

- the 2 matches of Kazuhiko Ogasawara vs Akio Kobayashi: Both of these matches were wild and you could feel the hate- and if you got hate, you got wrestling I want to see. I didn't adore these two as much you both did. The kick into the ringpost was completely beautiful.

I remember hardly anything from the Ogawa vs Kawada match. I don't think I liked it as much as Ogawa vs Goldberg. I remember drinking quite a bit. Though I must say that I remember quite a bit from the American Dragon match which we watched last. (6)

Hope God's mercy and kindness finds you and may he shine his face upon you,

DEAN.

~!~

A LETTER TO DEAN RASMUSSEN

Hey Dean,

It was also a pleasure to see you over the Easter weekend. Stopping by your house and visiting your family always allows me to blunt the culture shock that always happens when I accompany Kate to Richmond. (1) I also enjoyed sharing some of the cream of the crop wrestling wise, here are some of my thoughts.

-I have a review of the whole show with Hashimoto v. Tanaka elsewhere, so I won't rephrase.

-You mentioned that American Dragon could have had that match with anybody and damn is that the truth (2). The first time I watched it I was so blown away by Dragon's awesomeness, that I didn't even really notice Styles. Second time around I noticed a bunch of things that irritated me, mostly Styles utterly ignoring all of Dragon's nifty arm work when he went on offense. I think Styles performed alot better in his match against London (3). He was quite the afterthought here. The spot where Dragon breaks his opponents wrist is the greatest fucking thing in the history of stuff. Dragon was number one on the last 500, he is better now.(4)

-I have been watching a bunch of Ogawa lately, and he has inexplicably become the best seller in wrestling.(5) He totally takes control of the Goldberg and Kawada matches and owns them with the selling of the leg. He is basically a guy with one really over move, and a really great sense of how to work a compelling match. OGAWA! indeed.

-Speaking of Zero One guys who are smoking Ohtani. Ogasawara BABAY! I motherfucking loved those Karate matches. From the really great training montages (6), to the entire dojo's accompanying both guys, to the really fun HK film final battle matches, you get no better. I talked about the first match in my Z1 review, but the second match was even better. It was all about Kobayashi being this really brutal brusier, while Ogasawara just chops away. It was like Bob Sapp v. Ernesto Hoost, if instead of a cooning black guy and amazingly gay Belgian the roles were played by a guy with a pompador and an old dude.

~!~

NAWA Ring Warriors (10/11/03 - Rome, GA)

(by RAVEN MACK)

I'd been down on the wrestling lately, after the birth of a second kid under the mysterious lost sign of Ophiuchus(1), worried about lack of participation in extending my debt during the Christmas season(2), worried about a pair of secret society frat brothers being the Whopper and Big Mac, facing off for the televisually important role of spokesperson/figurehead of the seven-headed octopus-serpent beast that secretly steals my taxes and conducts genetic experiments in an underground network of caverns beneath the Four Corners region of the western U.S. that would make the Raelians seem like pleasant Sunday dinner guests...and the wrestling sort of got lost somewhere in the shuffle to push the couch against the front door and check my stock of hollow point 59 caliber armor-piercing bullets.

But then, after disconnecting the satellite (which doubles as a personal monitor, as well as helping to map Earth's magnetic grid, thus allowing time travel to become a reality, or an infinite number of realities, depending on your take on the Holographic Universe theory), and I was sitting there watching the syndicated WWE show that's mostly talk and recapping and maybe a match here or there, I don't know because I wasn't really paying attention – it occurred to me: Vince McMahon is okay; and the wrestling is okay. I mean in the grand scheme of ancient bloodlines sacrificing children to Moloch the Owl God at Bohemian Grove every summer, Vince McMahon is still trailer trash from North Carolina, no matter how many millions of dollars he can squeeze out of his snake oil wrestling product.

And I got to thinking further about this, and I was actually thankful that Vincent K. McMahon and his monster ego squeezed WCW out of business, sort of, because the only real tinge of conspiratorial nonsense in wrestling was when Ted Turner, a man who gave a billion dollars to the UN and conducted experiments on coyotes in Montana to steer them away from their natural inclinations(3), was pulling the strings behind the scenes and tried to plant the concept of a New World Order into the consciousness of the regular people. McMahon ran that out of business, and now at the flea markets and dirt tracks and IGAs of my World, the ignorant kids with no future don't wear NWO shirts anymore – it's always either that biker-with-a-vampire-fetish The Undertaker or the alcoholic bourgeoisie redneck hero of Stone Cold Steve Austin – and never anything else. Wrestling is not a dish designed for the upper

crust of society – it's concocted for the salt of the Earth, no matter how hard the internet intellectualizes it. Sure, it's art – but it's Ogden Nash, not Allen Ginsburg.

Which brings me to the wrestling again, happily. I had heard tell last year of a wonderful back road promotion in northwest Georgia that ran in a music park, with bluegrass pickin' going on the next room and horseshoe pits out back and the old white ladies sat in the same bleachers as New Southerner Mexicans, and they all loved on the professional wrestling styling of the NAWA Ring Warriors. Finding a tape of any of the action at Dillard's Music Park was pretty hard, which meant good to me, because obviously they cared more about putting a few hundred happy asses in the bleachers than they did about having thirty-seven happy asses in some chairs and then trying to recoup by peddling DVDs to every mark on the internet for the next month, till their next big super-indy spectacular. NAWA Ring Warriors – simple and honest old school Southern wrestling, with it sharing workers and/or feeding fresh faces to Wildside on the other side of the upper half of the state of Georgia. Finally, after long hours of haranguing and many empty promises, an unlabelled tape landed in my PO Box, and only by turning it under the sun did I notice written in a black Sharpie on the black tape "NAWA Ga. 10/11/03". Hell fuckin' yeah.(4)

Dillard's looks as spectacular as I'd expected, and the crowd is small, negating all that shit I said about packing happy asses in the seats. The single camera shot of the ring finally gives way to Dragon Dan Wilson, in his trademark weird red shirt, coming out to do the ring introductions and hype. The big match of this night is the second encounter between Ray Gordy and A.J. Styles, and people are hyping that up in the ring, but I can't hear it real well because I'm also listening to W.A.S.P.'s first LP at the same time. Everybody's standing with their hands over their hearts, and it's fun to watch that while "I Wanna Be Somebody" is blaring through my brain. "THE GODS YOU WORSHIP ARE STEEL...AT THE ALTAR OF ROCK'N'ROLL YOU KNEEL!" No doubt, Blackie Lawless, no fuckin' doubt.

ADAM ROBERTS/T.C. CARNAGE vs. FRENCHY RIVIERA/ICARUS

A pair of boiled peanut-fed gawky young wrestlers maybe two or three years removed from middle linebacking duties at the county high school come out, named T.C. Carnage and Adam Roberts, and they immediately are goading front row hillbillies into anger. Their opponents are a young ninja named Icarus and a fat dude named Frenchy Riviera. The fat Riviera is actually interesting enough, and his weird yin/yang complementing of the high-flying Icarus, who seems to show his ass crack during the execution of most of the moves he does, is indy-tastic. They dominate, because fat guys don't bump in early matches, until the young Icarus gets himself caught doing an ankle-lock that leads to a rope break. His honest ways cause Carnage and Roberts to take advantage of his naiveté, and turn the tables, peppering their upper hand with crotch thrusts to the crowd and ringside rule-stretching. I'm not quite sure who's who in the Carnage/Roberts pair, but they do some nice teamwork maneuvering, both move-wise, but also in the old heel team structure, with the little guy mouthing off to cause the ref to get involved in something other than watching the bigger heel guy super destruct young Icarus. Finally, a hot tag to the fat Frenchy, and he lays some flabby punches and misplaced boots for about a minute, then tags back in the miraculously refreshed Icarus, who just as immediately is

low-blown back into the role of Ricky Morton. Icarus and big heel go over the top rope, and Frenchy Riviera nails a heftyweight spinebuster on the smaller dude for the pin.

RAY GORDY vs. A.J. STYLES - pt. 1

Dillard's looks much fuller now, and there's Christmas lights up – a nice down-home touch. Apparently this A.J. Styles vs. Ray Gordy match-up is two out of three falls, broken up into three separate matches, all tonight, for the prestigious NWA World Heavyweight title. And Gordy comes out to "Badstreet" by Michael Hayes, being a member of the Extreme Freebirds, so he automatically rules. He's smallish, but has great bloodlines, and I'm sure grew up hearing "Simple Man" from time to time, whereas I'd imagine A.J. Styles loves Brooks & Dunn(5), or worse yet that godawful "American Soldier" song by Toby Keith. Toby Keith is to outlaw country as the WWE Hardcore title is to hardcore wrestling. Gordy comes with the wicked elbow in the corner, and now they tussle for advantage in the collar-and-elbow - probably the most hateful collar-and-elbow I've seen. After starting strong and stiff, they get a little sloppy, or maybe just on different speeds, but it's the first of three matches between the two tonight, so I can cut some slack.

Plus, just like that, it goes back into hyper-drive intensity, and A.J. Styles always ends up being better than I want to give him credit for when I watch him. Gordy does a swanton into Styles uplifted knees, shortening his life for my amusement. Styles does a nifty little tuck under roll-up for the first fall victory, and Ray Gordy needs to forget his lust for the rich man's gold.

BILLY LOVE vs. JAYSON PHOENIX

Your ref for the next match is a short, fat dude with a long ponytail, and I can guarantee you he knows how to smoke weed through an empty beer can. Michael Myers' Halloween theme is the entrance track for Billy Love, a regular-looking grungy heel type. He's going up against Jayson Phoenix, a bigger more well traveled looking motherfucker with the deliberate walk to the ring of someone involved in a grudge match. He hits the ring and goes right to pounding upon Billy Love, with some little strap on his hand. Then he pulls a couple of road signs from under the ring. I hate the road sign bit, though I can tell you from tearing them down, they are tougher than "industrial strength cookie sheets" as some dipshit announcer on WCW once said. Both men have tasted the sweet blade of gore already, yet I'm still bored by this match. They apparently hate each other, but I don't know why, and their anti-each-otherness is so obviously feigned. People always talk about workrate like it's the new Bible of wrestling, but goddamn, somebody needs to work on the workrate of believability. I'm not talking psychology, where master craftsman methodically work towards a culmination of planned body attack, but making me understand your hatred of each other. Phoenix is hinting at it, enough so that some gravelly-voiced grandma keeps screaming "C'MON JAYSON!" every thirty-nine seconds, but Love is just going through the motions. How can I hate him for hating Phoenix when I don't even see the hatred? They've wander-worked every nook and cranny of Dillard's main room here, and surprisingly, most people have stayed in their seats instead of following the melee around all over, and there's a beer-gutted Mexican dude in a white tank top and black cowboy hat sitting on the bleachers across the way. I like to sit by guys like that at a wrestling show instead of straight edge smarky kids who try to bust with the comedic one-liners all night long that would

have that clown chasing their ass with the broom on Showtime at the Apollo. Phoenix wins, then Love does the ol' point-of-chair-attack-to-the-knee post-match conundrum, and the mighty heatless grudge continues. Love does a sharpshooter with his arms around the ring post, and then smacks Phoenix in the face for good measure before he leaves.

ANDREW ALEXANDER vs. ZERO X vs. SETH CRUISE vs. CHIT MARTINEZ vs. THE WORKING MAN vs. KRIS KAMIKAZE

It's some sort of six-way clusterfuck for the NAWA Junior Heavyweight title with the following six men: "The One-Man Hair Band" Andrew Alexander (probably the most awesome indy character I've seen in years, a bizarre Willow the Whisp for post-extreme grunge super-cynical retro-love, who says, "I'm gonna take that junior heavyweight title and rock-n-roll all night, and party every day!"), Zero X (a Jimmy Rave looking kid), Seth Cruise (child-hugging, "Eye of the Tiger" vanilla babyface that the vanilla audience can put their trust into), Chit Martinez (bird-chested Mexicano en la casa), The Working Man (another child-hugging, "Eye of the Tiger" trustworthy babyface, but less vanilla than the other dude), and defending champion Kris Kamikaze. Alexander explained that if he or Martinez get pinned, they have to leave NAWA forever, so I'm guessing this isn't an elim match, but instead a sextuple threat. Martinez and Alexander of course start it out, and they come with the Ghetto Brawls DVD-quality fisticuffs at first, then settle into actual professional wrestling. Holy shit, this is senseless rapid-fire in-and-out craziness, with The Working Man taking the early lead as most awesome indy goofball. Zero X with the springboard moonsault to the outside; and there's three outside then, staggering up to take an appropriately reckless multi-rope springboard corkscrew kick by Alexander; making it four coming to their feet to catch a multi-whirl top-rope springboard insaniac by Kamikaze; but then Alexander goes back in the ring to beat up on Martinez and sing "Cherry Pie". No shit. He also yells out he feels like smoking in the boy's room.

One camera tapes rule, because as Working Man & Cruise set Kamikaze on the top rope for some plundering, suddenly outside the ring Alexander flies into camera range head first into the ring post. This spot winds down with everybody but Alexander laid out in the ring, he climbs in and gets a two-count on every guy, crawling from prone body to prone body, but not getting the duke. Kamikaze drops a really swank brainbuster on Martinez, with the pinfall broken up by The Working Man, leading to the part of the clusterfuck match where one guy outdoes one guy in the ring, but always one of the other guys suddenly jumps back in the ring to break up the pin, repeat, full cycle. Without warning, Kris Kamikaze hits a 450 splash on Alexander, to retain his title, and also now Rome, Georgia, and it's bluegrass-ass Wal-Mart denizens won't be blessed with "The One Man Hair Band" anymore.

Post-match, Andrew Alexander throws a fit in the ring, and the crowd is all sorts of loud with happiness over his departure, one dude even yelling, "You got whooped!" Alexander, though, finagles his way into getting one more title match, one-on-one, where if he loses, he will leave, and properly, according to the code of the pride-above-logic Southerner that I live by, calls Kamikaze a "pussy" to get him to take the bait. "You have to put your manhood on the line...you have to put your hair up," says Kamikaze, and Alexander has long, dark, Robert Plant locks, and who the fuck in this World can hook me up with an NAWA tape from 10/18/03? Goddamn,

that shitty clusterfuck highspot highlight reel actually established a quality motherfuckin' match for next week.

JOHN ARDEN/ICEBERG/TANK/RICK MICHAELS vs. NEMESIS/LOON-A-TIC/CRAZY FRANCIS/PLAYBOY PHIL

Now what we've got us a big, fat bunkhouse battle. "Hell Raiser" John Arden comes out first, with a hot bitch by his side and bullrope around his neck. He's teaming up with the Extreme Freebirds – Iceberg, Tank, and Rick Michaels, and I'm not fuckin' lying to you when I say I'd walk any alley in America with those three motherfuckers. Tank is Bull Pain-like in his ability to make a loud-mouth shut the fuck up because he makes it seem a little too real live. First out in opposition is the aggro-amped black man Nemesis, who is loud and ready to rumble. HOLY FUCKIN' SHIT, MOTHERFUCKERS! A front end loader comes through a door to the side, bucket held up proud, with Loon-A-Tic and Crazy Francis sitting in the bucket, in perhaps the greatest mental patient tag team gimmick ever. I can only hope that Morgus the Maniac is driving. A FUCKIN' FRONT END LOADER! And it carries them all the way to the ring, holds the bucket over the top rope, and they jump out. That is, easily, the greatest ring entrance I've ever seen in the history of grown men simulating hate-filled violence on each other inside of a modified boxing ring. The final member of team good guy is Playboy Phil, who comes out to "Midnight Rider" by Willie Nelson, and while everybody looked back at the regular entrance, he climbs the front end loader from behind and does a dive off the bucket into the ring onto his enemies. I can't be sure, but I'm thinking this is the greatest match since Jimmy Valiant took on the Great Kabuki in a coal miner's glove match, and when the fuck was Nikki Sixx ever a coal miner?(6) Iceberg takes a Raven-style drop toehold into the chair from one of the crazy guys, and brings the blood. Arden is stabbing the other of the crazy guys in the corner with some sort of really dangerous looking spike thing, and basically Arden seems to be a white Abdullah the Butcher in blue jeans, which is perfect by me. The good guys are getting plundered and bludgeoned. Rick Michaels, the consummate professional, drags one of the crazy kids in front of the single camera angle on a tripod, to get some close-up violence for the cameraman. Nemesis calls for a chair in the ring, but this is the South, not lawless Godless Philly, so instead of the ring being soaked in flying chairs like a Tijuana main event, everybody politely carries their folding chair to the ring and slides it in. I love the South. Tank German suplexes Nemesis onto his neck onto a pile of about 19 chairs, and everybody within vision grimaces. Holy fuck, Nemesis comes with the overhead German suplex on the immense girth of John Arden, who barely tucks his head under before hitting a pile of chairs and a lifetime of paralysis. Playboy Phil pins Arden, and I'm just realizing that there's an opening in the ceiling above the ring, or some weird flea market shit going on. One of the crazy guys runs around blowing painful mist in the faces of the Extreme Freebirds as Willie Nelson blares over the P.A. again. Tank gets on the mic, and even post-match, he takes a break from his poignant dissing of his babyface defeaters to tell some old lady in the front row to shut the fuck up. I'd pay good money to see a Tank/Bull Pain tag team. Actually, I probably would just try to convince somebody who spends a lot of money on tapes to send me a free dub of it, but nonetheless, I'd try really hard. Not as hard as I'd try to fuck the big natural breasted annoyingly talkative but studded belted teenage girl who works at the video store, but hard. That chick is pudgy and wonderful, the type of body shape that's perfect to fill with babies until about the age of 27, then they fill out the rest of the way, and

they're still perfectly imperfect, but a younger model of the same thing is always tempting, no matter how happily married you are. Probably the one truth that makes me think nature (or god or whatever) meant for man to have multiple female sexual partners is that after a woman squeezes a newborn out, they can't take the loving for a few months. Well, I guess they could, but I'm not some sort of pervert who gets off on making women feel pain; I just want to have more than one woman feel my love, and it be not overruled by stupid morality-based laws.

RAY GORDY vs. A.J. STYLES - pt 2

Hired hands remove the chairs, and it'll be time for Styles vs. Gordy – act two, scene two. Gordy is on Styles before he gets completely into the ring, and I'd rather be Terry Gordy's son than Joey Styles' second cousin. Shit, I just heard that loud-mouth Right Wing Ingram in the crowd, who was with us at the King of the Death Matches last summer; I'd recognize that obnoxious banter anywhere. You're definitely a fuckin' dorky-ass smart mark if you recognize people in the crowd on tapes you're watching. Getting into Gordy is confusing, because shit, he's Terry Gordy's son, so you expect certain things. But little Ray is more of a technical new school asshole type, perfect for a Super 8 semi-final, but not at all designed to lariat his way into Japanese cult hero status. Styles allows himself to be distracted by Rick Michaels ringside, leading to a beautiful German suplex into a bridge pinfall victory for Ray Gordy, making it one to one in this battle. Both of the first two matches in this triumvirate were rather abrupt, so I'm hoping the third one's a charm.

BULLDOG RAINES vs. NICK RAMPAGE

Bulldog Raines comes out with a Scooby-Doo head hat on, carrying a stuffed animal, to "Who Let the Dogs Out?" Fuckin' weird. Raines listens to the stuffed animal tell him things, and it's amazing how much mental illness is portrayed in professional wrestling. I mean, my grandmother just had to go in the psych ward because she decided to do an unsupervised Atkins diet and stop taking her brain medicine and insulin, which is sort of life-threatening for an old, fat woman with diabetes, so she ended up in the soft-walled hospital until they convinced her not to be that fuckin' stupid; but that's the only certified crazy person in my family, as far extended as I can think of. Nick Rampage, the opponent, has focused all his attacks on the left knee of Bulldog, using figure fours and kicks, and this seems to be one of those uncomfortable matches with an old school crowd where they don't really get behind the good guy, and the bad guy ain't all that bad, so it makes for a lot of sitting on their hands. A ref bump right before a Bulldog pin attempt, and the ponytail ref comes in to help out. We have a suplex by Raines, which leads to a pin attempt, and the two refs are on two sides of the wrestler pile and both count a different winner, so in the event of a screwy ref bump with a second ref, the NAWA rules are that the original ref's decision stands in order to piss off the crowd. Bulldog Raines looks and talks just like this guy we used to get to buy us beer back in high school. My buddy Zack was stupid, he took acid like thirty days in a row at school (usually I sold it to him) and one day he showed me this .22 he had in his pocket, which freaked me out. I don't like people I do drugs with to shoot up the high school. Anyways, Zack's mom lived with this big dude named Burley in a trailer, and Burley was cool, he had a gruff voice and he knew my dad from back in the day, so when we rolled over there to party in Zack's room, Burley would always get me to hang out in the front, we'd get high and watch surfing movies. Anyways, they had this weird cross-eyed guy

named Danny who stayed with them for a while, and we'd get Danny to go to the store with us to get beer, and he was Bulldog Raines, riding in a car with three or four teenage boys up to no good and him being like 35. That friend Zack, I saw him a year ago or so and he looks like he's been through chemotherapy treatment, but he's only around 28 or so, and cancer-free. I guess doing acid every day at school and carrying a gun around in your pocket will do that to you. What a fuck up. He married this chick he used to hate in high school, and the last time I was living in Farmville, I went to the liquor store to get some boxes because everybody knows the best place to get boxes for moving is the liquor store, and that chick's younger brother was the liquor store manager, so we shot the shit in the alley for a while, and he told me all about how fuckin' crazy and tweaked out Zack ended up being. Then again, his sister was stupid enough to have a baby with a guy who mocked her in high school and liked to do acid while carrying a gun around, so there's some Darwinism going on there, too.

ACE ROCKWELL/SHAWN TEMPERS vs. JAY FURY/JUSTIN RAMEY

We've got a ladder match for the tag titles, featuring one six-foot fiberglass ladder and one six-foot aluminum ladder. Ladders are not cheap, and I speculate that at least one of these ladders came from the same jobsite that the front end loader from earlier in the night did. Dragon Dan Wilson being five feet tall makes the belts look like they're dangling way further in the sky than they actually are. Ace Rockwell & Shawn Tempers are the challengers, with Ace Rockwell having the great nickname of "The Seven Figure Deal". They will be challenging NAWA's resident small-town superstars Jay Fury & Justin Ramey. Ramey is your redneck Jody Fleisch. They are exclusively using the fiberglass ladder right now, leading me to believe they have a low-rated 200 lb. aluminum ladder and are gonna put everybody on it later to cause it to crumple under stress, and create the illusion that this shit is mad real, yo. Well, too late – Ramey release suplexes Tempers into that ladder, leaned in the corner, and bends one half of it all to shit. You know, it just occurred to me that every stepladder I've ever seen in real life has that tray-holding contraption on the top step, yet every ladder match I've ever seen is missing that piece of the ladder. That means, for worker safety, somebody pops those bolts and eliminates the tray-holder. But that also means that it makes that ladder partially impotent for jobsite use, in regards to workers in the sense of getting paid by the hour rather than workers in the sense of knowing how to clamp an armbar while rolling through a springboard hurricanrana off the second rope.

Again, I negated myself, because the broken aluminum ladder still has the tray-holder on it; I hope these guys know that thing is not a step.(7) Jay Fury has been pretty solid in this match, sort of holding it together. Rockwell goes to set up the aluminum ladder, and Ramey hints at climbing the wrong side, which could end in tragedy, but the ladder's too busted to use like so. Shit, now the ponytail ref takes a bump, so that's two chicanerous matches in a row. Fury hits a sweet dive, evil ref sneaks back out, leading to Rockwell and Ramey climbing ladders together, and Rockwell throwing powder in his eyes so that he can grab the belts and tumble down for the ref to wake up and declare the heels the winners. Ramey and Fury embrace after the fact, and then Ramey turns heel. He should get a goofy mask from highspots and go work in Michinoku Pro.

RAY GORDY vs. A.J. STYLES - pt. 3

All that's left now is to draw a winner in the fifty-fifty raffle, and bring out the third Styles vs. Gordy match. This starts off killer, with Styles keeping it together, and them doing what they were hyped as being able to do. A.J. Styles does one of my favorite forearm, when he holds the back of the head so there appears to be little give. The other Extreme Freebirds are out ringside, and Styles catches them all with a dive. Gordy reminds me of Crash Holly with his spastic movements sometimes. Styles wins the match, gets beat down, then saved.

EPILOGUE

FIRST STAR OF THE TAPE: A.J. Styles. As much as I want to hate a little short-haired, God-fearing southern kid with rampant success at a young age, he always impresses. I hate that.

SECOND STAR OF THE TAPE: Andrew Alexander aka The One-Man Hairband. That dude is awesome. Totally awesome. Far more awesome than you probably know.

THIRD STAR OF THE TAPE: Tank. He makes it real, or at least real enough for me.

~!~

WWE NO WAY OUT 2004 – 2/15/04

(by PHIL RIPPA)

I am probably the last wrestling fan to watch this show... well at least the Eddy Guerrero/Brock Lesner match. Netflix had the DVD (1) and I figured "It's my vacation, I can suffer through this. (2)

ULTIMO DRAGON/BILLY KIDMAN/PAUL LONDON vs. TAJIRI/AKIO/SAKODA(3)

Since I ignored Heat when this match first aired – it's new to me! As I just said, this was shown on Heat. So that means it will probably be three minutes long and spotty. The opening section with London and Akio is nifty as Akio can bump correctly for all the fun offense that London was rolling out. Yeah, those WWE paychecks sure were worth it for Dragon. Meanwhile, Disco Inferno just waddles around the ring and subjects us all to the most sleep inducing face in peril. Even now I don't remember who won this. I think Tajiri got the pin on someone.

PPV opens with Torrie & Sable doing something in regards to the Playboy photo spread. I thank the inventors of the DVD and the ability to skip whole segments in a single bound.

DOUG & DANNY BASHAM/SHANIQUEA vs. SCOTTY 2 HOTTY/RIKISHI – Smackdown Tag Titles

Boy, this is a brilliant idea. Lets stick Shaniqua into the match just so we can write her out of the federation. In looking back at this card, it is amazing how long Scotty and Rikishi ended up with the belts. That also hints towards how barren the tag team scene has become. It's ugly early on as Danny ends up taking a Head Scissors 2004 – boy that didn't look right. I blame that on old Mr. Taylor. Doug Basham does the best sell of the power of the Polynesian head that I have seen in wrestling.(3.5) The double knockout spot less than three minutes into the match doesn't

bode well for the length of this affair. AWESOME! Double slingshot suplex. The Bashams know how to wrestle just to please me. This should have been a handicap match the other way with Rikishi vs. the Bashams. I would have enjoyed that more. I never realized until now how great Rikishi's ring apron work can be. He does a fine job as partner desperate for the tag and his facials when Shaniqua spit on him were top notch - just as great as him ripping out Shaniqua's(4) extensions. One of the most heelish things on the entire show was the fact that the crowd got teased with both the Worm and the Stinkface and they got nothing. THAT made this match enjoyable. Only thing better would have been teasing an Austin run-in. Or maybe someone taking off their top.

JAMIE KNOBLE vs. NIDIA – Blindfold Match

Nidia comes out with the makeup and hair of all those girls I went to high school with. Oh, and the fake boobs too. I wonder if Nidia had as many abortions. This is lots of Knoble acting clueless and Nidia idiotically getting herself trapped in the corners and whatnot. Jimmy Garvin and Kevin Sullivan are filled with shame. (4.5)

WORLD'S GREATEST TAG TEAM (Shelton Benjamin/Charlie Haas) vs. APA (Bradshaw/Farooq)

The interactions between Farooq and Benjamin are the enjoyable parts of this match as its like a father trying to keep his insolent son in line. Other than that... oof. Bradshaw is supposed to be selling his injured arm – of course, for him, that meant, let me just shake it a couple of times while I use it for every move. MAIN EVENT SUPERSTAR~! Sorry. Farooq does some very Mutohesqe selling of his arm and shoulder; unfortunately that is the entire body of the contest. I myself drifting off to sleepy time fairly easily - of course, I am old and feeble. The finish kinda saves the match as the WGTT bumps like maniacs.

Insert the long section of two guys who no longer work for the company bad mouthing each and eating up time that could have gone to other matches on the card. Really, the only way this could have been more annoying is if they both were wearing sandals... especially Sketchers sandals.

HARDCORE HOLLY vs. RHYNO

Time to kill the crowd. I am amused that Holly has basically become the de facto crowd killer guy on the WWE roster. Well at least on the Smackdown side. These two effectively do their job – especially with Holly going to the side headlock for the opening, what seemed like 45 minutes. I think the one thing that I really remember is the one guy who you can clearly hear on the DVD say “Hey Rhyno! Why the long face?” Christ, I hate wrestling fans. For some reason I am not really getting into this match though I feel like I should. Maybe if I watched it again or something. I mean there was a body vice and all. This was like all those Inoue/Shiga matches on those All Japan shows that you skipped over to get to Misawa vs. Kawada.

CHAVO GUERRERO JR. (w/ Chavo Guerrero Sr.) vs. REY MISTERIO JR. (w/ Jorge Paez) – WWE Cruiserweight Title

Man, Jorge Paez(5) fell hard and fell fast. I am sure all those blows to the head were worth it now. The recap videos before the match so showcase how amazing Chavo Sr. is as a second. The smirk he has on his face after Eddie Guerrero is found in the locker room alone makes him number one and the best. I guess I am the only person bothered by the whole “Oh Chavo is going to show the world Rey’s hideous face” slant they were pushing on the match - like the last 5 years didn’t exist. Yeah, I am cranky now. The match is eh.... Really hard to get into a contest that had so much build up focused on a celebrity second getting tossed three minutes in as this lead to the bothersome interference for the title change. I have grown weary of Misterio and this really is the standard Rey Jr. match working in all his signature spots. He did the 619 40 times(6). Then he took the top rope rib breaker – which while really cool – isn’t as much fun if it isn’t being done by Dean Malenko. There was also the Ray counters something into a bulldog spot. I dug the Chavo matwork. Shit, everyone needs to do the abdominal stretch like Chavo Jr. He got all freaky with the submissions. He turned the botched half crab into something about a thousand times more hurty. This could have been a lot better but it was the standard “We needed to cram awkward booking into the finish”. At least they didn’t rush it to give the Undertaker time to promote himself... oh wait, that was at the beginning of the match.

BIG SHOW vs. KURT ANGLE vs. JOHN CENA – #1 Contender Match

They bust out a tale of the tape (7) before the match, which while I appreciate the idea, they need to start doing it before all the matches. WHOO-HOO!!!! THREE-WAY!!!! Smell my excitement. There are very few things as entertaining as watching the Big Show work collar and elbow lockups. Yikes, there is a big batch of daylight showing in the blows being “landed” in this match. The poor production crew can’t keep up as they wildly swing between camera angles trying to protect the work.(8) They should have paid off on the tease of someone taking the bump to the floor. Big Show taking a German from the ring apron to the floor would have erased all the ill I have ever felt towards him in his worthless career. Instead, he sells a low blow forever. Plodding is a good way to describe this match. This is especially true during the Big Show works over Cena section of the match. Wow, Cena has some sorry ass absurd selling. Someone needs to fly in Ricky Steamboat to teach this boy how to sell a knee.(9) Great googly moggly this brokedown right quick. It’s the part where they all start exchanging finishers and Cena decides that a school boy on Big Show would make a really good move. Ooof.... It was not pretty. Okay, Show’s bizarro sell of the Angle Slam over the top rope was pretty great and I won’t hate him for the rest of this match. That of course isn’t very long as getting rid of Show allows Angle to use the ankle lock for the submission over Cena.

EDDIE GUERRERO vs. BROCK LESNAR – WWE Title

Brock Lesnar comes out first and traditionalists weep. Ugh, I don’t know if I never noticed it before but Eddie has some Scorpio Jr. level backne going. Creepy. I dug this match a lot. Was it really good? Yes. Was it Match of the Year, let alone WWE Match of the Year? No. (10) That doesn’t mean it is a bad match or anything. It was really fucking good – especially when compared to the rest of the card. The fact that they started the match working the angle that Lesnar was way more powerful than Guerrero was the way to go. Eddie has the World’s Best Possible Sting while Lesnar was doing a spiffy job impersonating Vader. Fuck! get Lesnar back into the company and give me a strap match. Anyway, Eddie eating Belly to Belly after Belly to

Belly was an example that repeated moves can be successful without having them be successive. I have really come to despise things like the never-ending powerbomb or Eddie's consecutive suplexes. Especially the suplex as there really is no reason the man taking the move should be cooperating to take another suplex. Heck, they were even able to improv out of a botched powerbomb into a modified giant swing that ended up being less preposterous than most giant swings. Lesnar takes the ENORMOUS top rope bump after missing the charge into the corner as a transition was boss. The PSYCHOLOGY~! here was great since Lesnar had hit the high knee earlier. Plus, the two did that battle over the knee to the post. That should occur everytime with that spot, instead of the business exposing "let me help you slide my crotch into this here post" The Cow Palace crowd loved the STF and I could just hear Schivone screaming "SUBMISSION THROUGH FEAR!!!" Actually, that was one of my few quibbles with the match as Lesnar had his leg worked over for a long section of the match and then barely sold it. If its a title match and your leg is worked over for ten minutes, at least do everyone the courtesy of not doing power moves for at least a minute after you transition back to offense. Another problem with the match was the announcing. (11) I am not even talking about Michael Cole "Bumbling Historian". The overselling underdog call has long since been effective since we all know what that means. I am watching the match. I don't need the hard sell. Of course, it was probably someone's brilliant idea in creative "If we make it seem like Eddie sucks, he will be all the more over!!" It's probably for the best that they didn't have to figure out how to handle the fact that it also made Brock look like he was losing to a nobody. Way to keep folks strong guys. But my biggest problem with the match was the ending. The finish had all the markings of having Heyman's big fat greasy fingers on it. Ref bump. CHECK! Battle of Foreign Object. CHECK! Everyone in the ring Koed. CHECK! Unexplained run-in by supposedly arrested guy. CHECK! I am surprised they didn't have Mondo hop the rail and turn on Eddie. (12) I didn't like Dead's Guy Brother ripping the cage door of the ring. I didn't like Dave Schultz, guest referee and I didn't like this.

~!~

MEMPHIS WRESTLING TV - WEEK 41

(by TOM KARRO-GASSNER)

I love me some studio wrestling.(1) Yes I do.

This is week 41 of Memphis Wrestling. Watched it on the net. (2)

Derrick King vs. Tracy Smothers

Awesome it's Derrick King vs. Tracy Smothers. Derrick King can take a high Memphis backdrop really well. Tracy Smothers knows how to work subtle stuff in for studio wrestling.(3)

Unfortunately this is a nothing match. Goes about three minutes King doesn't take a backdrop and Smothers doesn't do much worth writing about. Too damned short even for studio match.

Bart Sawyer vs. East Coast Bad Boy #1

Pre-match Bart Sawyer does some really piss poor mic work. Sawyer has been around forever. Dug him and Buddy Wayne as the young mic workers in Portland. Dug him on the mic in

Memphis and Nashville. But damn is this some piss poor mic work. Match isn't much better. East Coast Bad Boys are two of the scummiest looking indy wrestlers in the history of indy wrestling. Filthy, filthy scum. They actually may have accomplished the impossible and look too scummy for pro-wrestling. Like Terrick the Great and Truth Martini would look at them and go "eeewww". The Bad Boys are wearing sleeveless undershirts with urine and jizzim stains. On some level I can understand Bart Sawyer wanting to work loose with a guy wearing a semen stained undershirt. If Bad Boy #1 looks to have jacked off onto his own sleeveless undershirt pre-match, I can't blame Sawyer for working this loose with him. I wouldn't want to touch that either. But then again I'm not a pro-wrestler. This is pro-wrestling, if you are afraid to have another mans jizzim on you...you probably should pick another career.(4) East Coast Bad Boy looks so untrained that I don't care how many tickets he sold, even Frank Goodman wouldn't let him wrestle. The Bad Boy horribly botches a leapfrog out of the corner spot and Smart Bart Sawyer takes it home.(5) The less said about this match the better.

Also I realized during this match that the Memphis studio ring is less than a foot off of the ground. I mean traditionally studio rings haven't been high but this may as well have been mats surrounded by ring ropes.

Lifeguard Dustin Starr vs. Bad Boy #2.

I kind of like Bad Boy 2 here, as hes clearly better of the Bad Boys and the better of the two workers in this match as well. Dustin Starr pretty much stinks. He wins the match with a horrible top rope elbow. Apparently as hes working a life guard gimmick, his finisher is called the "jellyfish Elbow". Seems appropriate name. Mable does a pretty unconvincing babyface promo. Man this show is stinking it up.

Kevin White vs. Koonta

Pre-match White does some babyface mic work. Best southern babyface mic work on the show thus far. Really good if you can understand it. And damn did I dig this match. Kevin White is a Bill Dundee trainee been around for about three years and punches like a Dundee trainee. Actually seems to have good punches on top turnbuckle in the corner (no matter the camera angle these look good). Which is a wrestling punch that often looks shitty. His bodyshots could use alot of work though. Koonta is tiny. Tiny tiny. They're trying to sell him as Kimala's son? Did Kimala marry a pygmy girl? Are there pygmys in Uganda? Aw fuck I need to hear the Kimche mic work explaining how Kimala's marriage ebbed the 30 year war between the pygmys and the Bantus.(6)

It also should be pointed out that Memphis is predominantly black city. The live audience at Memphis Tv tapings is predominantly black. Memphis wrestling is run by Cory Macklin. And there is Koonta with face paint making tribal noises and bugging out and rolling his eyes. (7) I love America.

It should also be said that he coons well, for whatever its worth. I mean if your going to coon in wrestling, the least you should do is do it well within the context of the match and the selling. He does that. He is so ready for a tour of Japan on that alone. Sappasito. Aw man someone know

how to make a CDR off the net feed and send it to Ultimo. Koonta/ Arakencito tag team could rule. He also is hell of fun eating offense and on offense with a bunch of Pygmy highflying stuff. Variation of Mr. Nieblas rope bounce thing into a splash and such. I mean Koonta is really fucking good. I need to see his match with Christopher. This whole match is just really both worked and layed out well. It's a match that ends with a ref bump and a guuy getting kicked while holding a chair....and yet I still liked it.

Worth watching the show to get to this match. Just really satisfying.

I don't understand why Koonta isn't currently teaming or feuding with Jimmy Jacobs. Jimmy Jacobs/Koonta vs. Boz/Bradley would pop any crowd in the country.

Main event: Mabel/Lawler vs. Brian Christopher /Sexy Assassin #7

Damn is Mabel tall. You realize how short everyone in the WWE now is when you see Mabel just towering over Coach in a pre-taped segment.(8) Match starts with Lawler/Mabel (the DOUBLE KINGS) dominating with Sexy Assassin and Christopher stooging for them. Don't know who Sexy Assassin #7 is but he's really good at the stooging. The crowd is really lucha like in just being all over the heels. Christopher on the apron is really good at riling them up while Assassin stooges in ring. Lawler is fun on offense and hits a great bulldog.

Christopher/Assassin #7 cheat to transition to offense and double team on Lawler. Lawler is also still good at eating offense and working in peril. Christopher since leaving the WWE looks to have learned how to punch again.(9) Hot tag to Mabel who cleans house with double clotheslines and a really painfull looking splash in corner. Second Mabel match I've enjoyed in a row.(10) Sexy Assassin is pretty good and wonder who he is. Dig the Lawler/Mabel Double Kings team. Would be excited to see them work PWG's Double Dragon's, or NOAH's Double Takeshis. Would be less stoked to see them tag against a pair of doublemint twins...but if someone got the tape, I'd buy it.

The show starts off poorly. Would recommend people watch 35 first. But worth watching last two matches of week 41.

~!~

No truning back now! I'm under attack now!

SINGLES GOING STEADY!

What do you knooooow? What do you knooooow? What do you knooooow?

~!~

HIROSHI TENZAN vs. THE SHADOW (11/30/03)

(by PHIL SCHNEIDER)

My new internet mistress IWTv delivers this random match from Tenzan's mercifully brief IWGP run (1). Shadow is Apocalypse from Stampede, who I remember as a guy with a street musician gimmick in Matrats. He looks a lot like a shorter Brian Adams . This was a really indy wrestling match for a match with an IWGP champion. Lots of standing switches, a couple of nifty moves

from Shadow. Tenzan comes into the match wearing a head bandage, which Shadow rips off, which leads to about the most heatless bloody match in Puro history. Most everything Tenzan hit looked okay, and wasn't intermittently loose like he tends to be, but this really felt like a Kanyon v. Orlando Jordan Velocity semi-main (2). Perfectly acceptable, but you are really just killing time until the Chuck Palumbo match

ANTONI INOKI vs. ANDRE THE GIANT

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

A classic of the Japanese variety with Andre heeling. The Hydro[1] faded in during the match, taking me to a time when I was much younger and wrestling was real, damnit, and I hit an Alabama Jam off the side of a trampoline onto a neighbor kid who was lying in a random pile of dog shit. He coughed blood and got worms. This has fuck-all to do with Andre/Inoki, except that Andre had one hell of a convincing cravat. A better cravat than most anyone alive on the WWE roster. When I relent more and more from watching WWE stuff -- even as I sit through entire swathes of Naturals matches on Prentice's show -- it's because of the loose style and the inattention to actually simulating combat with the intensity of my long-ago trampoline tussles.

JERRY LAWLER vs. TERRY FUNK – Memphis, TN – 1981 aka The Empty Arena Match
(by RAVEN MACK)

Anyone who's a wrestling fan should've seen this by now (and probably has), as it's a true classic. With the business struggling to keep satisfied fans in the seats over the years, it's ridiculous to think of a popular promotion putting their main event feud on inside an empty arena, just to carry out an angle on TV. But that's exactly what happened.

Terry Funk makes this match for me. In the first place, this match is set up just because Terry Funk is a lunatic who thinks the referees and fans and promoters and everyone is against him in a conspiracy to keep Lawler on top. And for this match, he comes out the heel side of the arena, in straight wrestling attire, no robes or gimmickry, because there's nobody to pomp and circumstance for, immediately tearing into Lawler for not showing up, and continues to do so, until Lawler finally walks in, in full robe and crown. Funk, of course, mocks this, calling him a clown because shit, Lawler does look like a clown entering the empty arena from the face side all dolled up like it's a regular Monday night in 1981 Memphis full of cheering fat-assed rednecks with Little Debbie crumbs in the folds of their chin. "Don't you realize that there's nobody here...you jackass!" The Funker is a goddamned legend, and 1981 Terry Funk would be less likely to murder 2004 Terry Funk than the 1981 Jerry Lawler would murder 2004 Jerry Lawler were we humans privy to time travel and comprehension of the fourth dimensional space/time continuum (1).

The match itself is a sloppy brawl because they're both naked out there, with nothing to cover the work of the match – which, when you think about it, was a pretty nutty thing to do at that time. Funk – being a screaming, deranged mad man – gives it authenticity though. And I love a good Dracula stake-in-the-heart spot, as Funk teases with his homemade wooden spike into Lawler's eyeball. Of course, you know the story, how Jerry Lawler is the forevermore persistent bulldog of a good ole boy who stabs Funk in the eye, and we end with Lawler, pretty much silent throughout this whole event, leaving as Funk cries to God about his eye, asking for help.

"And that fans, is exactly why there are officials assigned to matches to try and keep some kind of order rather than see the animal type of things you saw here today," says Lance Russell, bringing all motherfuckin' home. There was no good guy here – just the lesser of two evils coming up victorious in the match, but not at all victorious within the context of the depths both me just sank.

MASA CHONO vs. SHINYA HASHIMOTO - New Japan "LAST BATTLE OF SUMMER" (8/2/99)
(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

A warm summer day in March, saw me editing a piece [2], listening to Augustus Pablo, with this tape as ambient wallpaper. A couple of ladies came over for greens. One of them, a fly girl by any description, marked out like a monkey for the strikes. She thought the match was real, and I spent a long time explaining to her how the ending was still predetermined even though the strikes were like outtakes from Vader/Inoki or Benoit/Regal. She was taken with Chono, started babbling about the Yakuza. I think she left my apartment not believing that an NJ main event was a work -- incredible. Yes, the woman who loves Chono and Hash is a woman I should get closer to -- that's a given.

BARRY WINDHAM vs. BAM BAM BIGELOW
(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

Windham looked fine here in the NWA of 1988, just like he did against Ron Bass or some other tub of goo throughout the 80s [3]. Bam Bam? He manages to fuck up getting thrown out of the ring. Unreal, and his attempt to cover for this blown, ultra-basic jobber spot really exposes the bidness at Techwood Drive, if you will. This was a impromptu match turned schmozz, a TBS staple that was, as CRZ used to say, the pretzels in the snack mix. Oliver Humperdink is your face manager, by the way. The post-match interview where he and the scene-chewing tower of booking power Dusty [who materializes more suddenly than Mark Lewin did from the Atlantic, coming out of nowhere to get on camera] declare fealty to each other is like watching Hitler and Stalin tongue-kiss on a newsreel.

RIC FLAIR vs. GEORGE SOUTH
(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

The ten minute Flair enhancement special, vintage NWA 1988, with copious matwork and South looking strong. I've seen 500 of these type matches, I think, and Flair was among the very best when working with jobbers. Very back-n-forth affair here, with a Flair flip, the thwarted top-rope axehandle, the "No, don't throw me off the top, Mr. South. NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!", two comical attempts at top-rope tomfoolery from the enhancement talent, the high vertical suplex from Flair, and the "NOW! [We go to school]" Figure-four finish. Probably the most high-profile match of South's career, sprawled over two segments, and for the most part he stepped up and looked as credible as, say, a Mike Graham or a Denny Brown against Flair. **1/4, for those playing at home. A billion more *s for Flair's post-match promo: as the champ sees it, people get hurt and careers get ended, and the Road Warriors apparently know what "Boston creme" is all about[4]. What a rush!

JAY YOUNGBLOOD/RICK STEAMBOAT vs. DORY & TERRY FUNK:

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

What to do when the genki babyfaces get no reaction compared to the gaijin legends? If you're Jay and Rick, you work as loose as possible. Everything Youngblood and Steamboat did on offense seemed tentative, a half-step off. This early 80s AJPW match looked really nice in the abstract, but in execution was forgettable thanks to the non-Funk participants.

BILLY GRAHAM vs. BOB BACKLUND

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

A Sicilian Stretcher match from Philly, 1978, with the referees putting the prone participant on the stretcher when told to by the non-prone guy. This was silly crap -- Backlund worked loose, Graham worked very slowly. This match called up so many bad memories -- a bearhug took me back to the halcyon days of Hogan/Giant in WCW, the more tender work recalled the recent HHH/HBK from Raw -- that it pretty much broke up the party. When the match started, the room was full of wrestling fans; by the time it ended, people were collecting their belongings like participants in a fire drill [5]. Bob Backlund is overrated in so many ways, and I don't know why WWWF would keep a title on him for five months, let alone five years.

JERRY LAWLER vs. TERRY FUNK – 3PW Philadelphia, PA (May 3, 2003)

(by RAVEN MACK)

Unfortunately, in cueing up this 3PW tape, I caught the tail end of a Kevin Sullivan vs. Gary Wolfe match, and the old Sullivan puts on perhaps the worst wrestling match I've ever seen in my life, while wearing a pair softball coach shorts. I mean, it's beyond sad. I hope if I become that much of a shell of myself in my later days that drug-addled kids stab me and sauté my flesh (2) in an apocalyptic hallucinogenic frenzy.

This doesn't bode well, because my whole point here was to watch the same two men from The Empty Arena match go at it 22 years later in front of a successful paying indy crowd of a couple hundred people. My how the times have changed, from denying 8000 at the Mid South Coliseum, to being stoked at 450 in the Electric Factory night club. Lawler, the pearl-toothed pervert clown of today, is not so much a shell of the mini-mulleted Nova Supersport-style Lawler of the early '80s as much as he is a repackaging of himself; but a lot of his soul was sacrificed in the process.

Funk comes out to "Wanted Dead or Alive" by Bon Jovi, which bothers me, because hearing "Desperado" anywhere on Earth, whether it be classic rock dreck while painting a roof or the muzak version in a mall, instills in me an unexplained desire to climb things and moonsault on motherfuckers I hate. And just like the Empty Arena match, Lawler is silent at first, and Funk gets on the mic and runs down sports entertainment in general and brings it to a point with some historical Lawler hatred.

Funk is so great at being the mad man, and it forces Lawler to quickly turn off the smile, and you can see him following the Empty Arena formula of being pulled back into this grudge. Whenever they hit the ropes, one or the other is rubbing an elbow or a fist in the other's face, and the ref

has to keep physically getting in the middle of the two. For the first few minutes, Funk is putting his evil attention onto Lawler's left arm, and confusing the drunks in the crowd by being all mat-based, though still very ornery about it. But Lawler starts throwing them fistulas of fury that he was so famous for back in the day.

I often think about dumb shit in wrestling that you could clip together like six hours of different footage of, and put it on a big screen with some twisted music like Kraftwerk or Ornette Coleman behind it, and play it in some arthouse and watch the uber-nerds overanalyze it into making perfect sense. Terry Funk throwing chairs into the ring while staggering around ringside is a great example of this. It'd go great with some of the more far-out Eddie Harris records probably (3).

Funker starts bleeding, and that's the first smile we see from that clown...that jackass...Jerry Lawler since his entrance. They get ringside and Lawler throws the first shitty blow of the night – an effeminate chairshot – but Funk keeps the chair on his head and flips around and acts like he's choking once he gets caught up in the ropes, allowing Lawler to come back with a second chairshot that's more believable. Actually very believable. One thing I've noticed from Funk is it seems if he's in a match and the other dude is half-stepping it, Funk's not afraid to goad him into picking it the fuck up.

Funker's got a nice crimson mask going, and Lawler is getting cocky, causing the crowd to turn on him, and he motherfuckin' nails the fistdrop upside the back of Funk's head.

But Funk turns the tide with a low blow, and he goes into his normal nutty routine, giving Lawler some nice chair treatment ringside, and teases a piledriver into a table, but drops Lawler face first and follows it up with a legdrop that breaks the table and lets the men fall where they may. I can respect these old dudes being this dedicated to their stupidity at this stage in their life, when most men are physically pushing it by playing two rounds of golf during the week.

Back in the ring, Lawler spikes Funk with a piledriver, and the Funker is twitching like an epileptic, but still kicks out at two, just like with the fistdrop. Another piledriver, but another two-count kickout, and the cockily smiling Lawler frowns and mouths some expletives under his breath.

Lawler holds Funk's bloody face up in front of some ringside marks, and then gives him a spike on the concrete, and laughs, spitting water on people along the barricade. He's gone straight up heel, and Funk is now the forevermore persistent bulldog of a good ole boy, but filtered through today's anti-hero heroic standards.

Lawler gets on the mic, and tries to get Funk to his feet, to mock him with a Stone Cold Stunner. Lawler's laughing and cartooning it up with the crowd, and this is motherfuckin' great, probably greater than the crowd even understood, as Funk, representing the old school old fool, keeps kicking out at two against the Lawler, representing the old school guy who willingly shackled his soul for a few cheap sheckles.

Funk makes the quick turnaround, but only gets a two as Lawler, still the crafty vet, gets his foot on the rope. Funk gets spiked through a table, but still kicks out at two, yet again. Lawler is going for the fifth piledriver when Funk backflips him, but Lawler rolls him over, and then Funk

rolls through that to grab the legs and lean over to pin Lawler. Funks calls for another empty arena match, immediately, but Lawler, as the heel, shits on that.

As bad as this could've been being both these guys are far beyond their prime (4), it was a damn fine match – probably the best wrestling match I've seen on the video machine in a number of months. It doesn't have that red hot angle-driven heat of the Empty Arena match, but it's definitely a much better match. God Bless these old fucks for still having some heart when they can find the inspiration. The professional wrestling needs more heart.

PAUL ELLERING vs. BILLY ROBINSON (Memphis, 1980)

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

JIP a shade after the ten minute mark. This is the best Ellering singles match I've seen, and this got more heat than Jumbo/Billy 1977 did in Charlotte [Memphis, with Jimmy Hart at ringside for Precious Paul, will have heat though]. At times, this was almost like Luger/Flair from Battle of the Belts 3 -- Robinson leading Ellering through some fairly nifty mat stuff that Ellering could credibly negate because of his superior power. Ellering gets control after Robinson "botches" a backbreaker by not setting his knee properly, but for the most part this is Robinson, as face, outsmarting his opponent [something most faces aren't given leeway in the booking to do]. This isn't high-end Robinson, but worth checking out if you like Memphis styled stuff and want to see Robinson work that style credibly.

TROY T. TYLER vs. DIRTY DUTCH MANTEL

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

Glorious Southeastern action from 1980. Tyler is a Dusty/Thunderbolt clone, minstrelling if you will for the mizarks -- but T3 is not nearly the worker Dusty is [6], lacking rhythm, originality, much at all beyond a bleach-job, man-tits, and a winning way of calling Mantel a "Pekingese dogface turkey". Mantel is one of the better wrestlers in any territory he works, and this gimmicked up period of SECW is no exception. Tyler can't work a lick, so there's a lot of kick-punch here that Mantel barely holds together, but then there's this sweet sequence where Dutch tries to work a amateur floatover into a Cobra Clutch. Dutch loses his TV title trophy (~!) here when some jackass face comes in and counts the pinfall in place of the absent referee. I yelled 'BULLSHIT!' at my TV, and what else can you ask for from a 24 year old wrestling match? Dutch Mantel probably should be in the Observer HOF, though I don't think he's even been seriously considered. The man could book and work his ass off, and didn't push himself to the moon when booking. He's the American Lyger.

DRU D'LITE vs. TOMMY GUNN -From the NC indy 'North American Championship Wrestling', late 2003

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

D'Lite is an undersized heel; Gunn is the second coming of Todd Champion, green but he [7] tries and is 'rawboned'. Gunn has 50 pounds and a few inches on the heel, and busts out an STF among other moves that are high-end for a power-wrestling face. Spotcalling was noticeable here; both of these guys could use seasoning, but with Ricky Morton around doing

commentary for this outfit, they couldn't have a better person around to tell them how southern-style works.

RICKY MORTON/DYLAN RAGE vs. JJ JAYZE/JESSE LEE

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

Morton will have to tell them how southern style works, because he can't show them at this point; his knees look shot in the way that happens to a lot of old wrestlers. He was protected in this match; came in for the hot tag, threw a couple of unconvincing punches, and he and Rage hit the dubba-dropkick. Jesse Lee is probably the most promising worker in this -- fluid, at times, though he looks a bit scrawny, kind of like a CB that always gets beat in the 4th quarter. Rage and Jayze held their own, but there's a reason they work a indie based in Supply, North Carolina.

JUNKYARD DOG vs. BUTCH REED - From Mid-South

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

Bill Watts flying solo on the commentary, and he doesn't go two minutes without calling JYD out for leaving M-S for "easier competition" in the WWF, for "gaining a lot of weight" since leaving Watts' kind tutelage, etc. This was a fun little match -- Reed brings it, and Watts is right when noting that JYD lost it really quickly after going north. Butch Reed is the benefit of JYD's burial here, but everyone knows that Reed didn't stick around Mid-South forever either.

MIDNIGHT EXPRESS (EATON/CONDREY) vs. BRICKHOUSE BROWN/MASTER GEE

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

Mid-South again, with Cornette wearing a Grappler-style mask to hide his recently shaved head. Gee comes out to Rapper's Delight, a nice touch. Bill Dundee working face color is a treat here also. I saw Brickhouse wrestle often during the 80s, though usually deep in the undercard of houseshow in the Charleston County Hall, SC [8]. Very enjoyable match -- the black babyface is a staple of the Watts card, as well it should be; wrestling, Watts-style, was for people who were downtrodden by poverty/racism/inequity, and the proof of that was in the Watts crowd, which popped when they were supposed to pop. Could never happen now, not in America in 2004. That makes me pessimistic about our culture.

OLE ANDERSON/SUPER DESTROYER vs. PAUL JONES/JAKE ROBERTS: 1982-ish, Mid-Atlantic match from the Raleigh studio.

(by ANTHONY GANCARSKI)

Jones and Roberts are your reasonably genki faces here, and it bears mentioning Paul Jones' adaptability. He turned heel more times than Lex Luger, yet works here as the upper midcard face mentor to the Snake. All four guys here can work that stiff southern heel style which comes through in this match. Snug, stiff, fast-paced work here -- it's a shame Jake and Paul didn't team up in the WWF as a 'cowboy' team. That woulda drawn. Or Jake and Ron Slinker [9] working a Fabulous Ones variation. Hell, Jake and Slinker vs. La Resistance/Cade/Jindrak has a real jailhouse quality to it -- it can be booked for WM21!

your endless and your annoying EAGLE PRO CRUISERWEIGHT TOURNAMENT REVIEW

Non-Tournament: Big Ishikawa (Eagle) vs Hiroshi Wakabayashi
(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Big Ishikawa drives around Tokyo in his Chrysler K-Car-"Smoke On The Water" blairs out of his 1976 Alpine speakers. "Man, the 70s were fuckin awesome. I wish I was around back then. It was simpler. So much less bullshit, you know."

"Yeah Big, but there was also inflation and the Cold War and disco...."

"Look darlin, the Bee Gees were fuckin awesome. We could go out in our polyester suits and Latin Tango and everything."

"Sounds like more fun than watching you try to be a professional wrestler. Who are you wrestling tonight?"

"I don't know. Some new guy the boss is bringing in. Doing like a moth gimmick or something. Anyway. When I'm headlining the Tokyo Dome, you'll be right there in diamonds and furs. I'll treat you good one day baby. You stick with Big Ishikawa. I'm goin places."

"I love you- though you are completely delusional. We should go to Hardees, they have those 2/3 pound burgers with the... what the hell is that?"

Big stops the car and Yumi walks over to what looks like a diamond-encrusted red jewelry box. "What the fuck? This must have fallen off the back of a truck or something."

"Yumi the detective forgets one detail: there are no dents or scratches. Hm. You should... you should open it."

"Fuck that, Big. What if it has like a human head in it or something? YOU open it."

"Okay. I don't give a fuck. You gotta be a..." Big opens the lid and blinding light shines out and loses his grip. The box floats four feet off the ground as Big and Yumi's eyes go saucerlike. Two tiny women slowly rise from the middle of the box. They speak in unison.

"You are Big Ishikawa. You are loudly cursing. We are sad to tell you that you are to be destroyed by our protector, Wakabayashi."

Music box music comes from the bottom of the box and the two little women start singing-
"Waka-Bayashi- YA! Waka-Bayashi-YA!"

They quickly switch to operatic Italian

"il vostro grasso è il nostro uso di protezione
il vostro lariat shitty proteggerli
gloriously atterra sul vostro torto

del collo dall'i hiptoss
che semplici piangiamo alla bellezza dei vostri rotoli di grasso
come i tetti del grasso di rognone
sopra le nostre teste mentre voi prendete le scosse crappy
agli scones della cassa e le ciambelle diamo voi per aumentare
il vostro grasso ardente di giro di protezione!(1)
Waka-Bayashi- YA! Waka-Bayashi-YA!"

"Big, what in the fuck is this?" Yumi flinches as the tiny women become enraged.

"You should not curse in front of the Tiny Women of the Sacred Wakabayashi. His enchanted fat will save us all. We must summon him NOW to destroy you!"

"Yumi, what the fuck is going on? These chicks are are like 6 inches tall but they are loud as shit."

"YOU CURSE AGAIN! WAKA-BAYASHI- YAAH! WAKA-BAYASHI-YAAAH!
Rend il suo grasso per fare più del vostro proprio grasso!
Schiacci la sua testa con il vostro volkswagen come le coscie!
Macini il suo underarm grasso in una salsiccia squisita!
WAKA-BAYASHI- YAAH! WAKA-BAYASHI-YAAAH!"

The two tiny women throw a Jimmy Dean Link Sausage on the ground and it BURST OPEN! A fat man of 5 foot 6, 340 pounds squeezes out of the 2 inch sausage. He fires an electrical power blast from his dime-sized nipples- POWERED BY THE POWER OF FAT!

"Unnngh! Holy SHIT! Yumi get the fuck out of here!" Big feels a greasy coating on his skin and blood trickles out of the side of his mouth. "Use fat against ME?!?! I'm THE MOTHERFUCKING KING OF FAT! MUTHAHHAAAAH FUCKAH!!" Big dives into the heap of a man that is Wakabayashi. Wakabayashi's stretchmarks across his stomach begin to spray a fetid silken coating that impairs Big's vision.

"UGH! Horrible Fumundah cheese-like silk! The smell is.... HORRIBLE!" Big gets his lighter out and burns the waxy substance away. "Wakabayashi, you can shoot all the shit you want to at me. It can't cover up for the fact that YOU CAIN'T WRESTLE!"

Big kicks Wakabayashi in the stomach and Wakabayashi keels over. Big hoists Wakabayashi up by the waist and does the fattest, splattiest powerbomb. Cheese fries fly out of the flaps of fat under Wakabayashi's love handles.

"Yumi, I can only wonder what other horrible mysteries he would have shot at me. Especially if he could have pointed his naked cornhole at me."

"Jesus Christ, Big, what in the fuck made you think about THAT?"

"C'mon, it would have to be like exploding eclairs out of his ass or something."

Wakabayashi rises to his feet- knowing he'd been beat. "So I guess you are going to kill the Tiny Women of Wakabayashi now..."

"What the fuck are you talking about? We just found this box on the road and..."

"Oh. Did you cuss in front of them? Their fucking Pentecostal faeries and they are such fucking uptight little bitches 100% of the time. It's usually somebody cussing or they end up at a dance and the dancing enrages them or something."

"That's really fucked up."

"Yeah, but they are really sweet once you get to know them- volunteer work for children, what have you. Our ancient sacred deal is that I am to protect first and ask questions second. You're the first fat man to ever best me."

"It was a pretty great powerbomb. You should get some more wrestling training. You wouldn't break your neck on armdrags."

"Yeah, I've been pretty busy at work and I'm moving and shit. I'm gonna get back to all that this fall. Cool. Sorry about all that."

"No problem. How do you do that shit with your nipples? That was fuckin bad ass."

THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER (OCCASIONAL) VIDEO REVIEW

- Some Guys With Some Fists Bitter About Wrestling -